

HABIB SABET MEMOIRS

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IN THE NAME OF GOD

Can Anything begin without mentioning His name?

Perhaps, dear reader, you too, like the writer of these memoirs, has discovered that the path of life is not always smooth, safe and without danger. It is a road with curves, ups and downs and full of surprises which man, because of his nature and destiny, must follow and accept as a reality of existence.

I, too, like all travelers on this road, have for the last 82 years, followed this path and crossed all the hardships, detours and impediments and have come to accept the truth of this creation.

The memories that you read in this book are like footsteps that have been left behind by someone who survived those curves, impasses and hardships. Better still, let me compare them to fires that have undergone various stages and remain aglow in my life. A poet once said, "nothing remains after a caravan's journey but the images of fires that it brings home."

Many of my friends and acquaintances, and especially my sons Iraj and Hormoz, encouraged me to gather these "fires" in one place so that my "experiences, visions, tales, learning and warnings" would warm them as well as the readers of this book. Albeit, that I, myself will slowly lose the warmth of life, and sleep in the eternal coldness of dust.

In this book you will see signs and guidance that may make tomorrow's path clearer, solutions to your life's problems easier and your table full of blessings.

I was never arrogant or egotistical, nor do I want to "show-off" in writing this book, especially since the light of my candle is fading and there are only a few steps left to the end of my days.

My life is summarized in three words: "Innocence-Maturity-Extinction"

Habib Sabet

25 Dec. 1989

A CHILD'S RECOLLECTIONS

When you grow up you ask “why did I do certain things when I was a child?” The main reasons are: your environment, necessity and childishness.

Now, at the age of 86, I well remember that my maternal grandfather, Mirza Khalil (Photo#1) had built a modest house in the south of Teheran on Jenat Golshan St. (at one time called Pahlavi Ave. and now Mossadegh). At the end of the small courtyard, a two room building was allocated to my father, mother, and sister Tahereh, and it was there that we lived.

My father was born in Teheran (Photo#2). Both of my parents' ancestors were originally from Kashan, but a long time ago came to live in Teheran. My father who was born about 110 years ago (1880) and passed away in 1957 was not educated and actually illiterate. However, he was steadfast and stood on his own, had a strong character, was kind and very faithful. He sold cloth in a shop located at Old Shahpour Street. He enjoyed and cherished his occupation so much that he would get up before dawn, say his prayers, meditate and rush off to his work. Even though he had a modest income, he was very generous, simply because he had endured poverty and a simple life. Every year, at the beginning of autumn, knowing that there are needy people, he would gather food and clothing and with love and joy go to their homes and present them with such.

Not having gone to school, nor attended math classes, whenever a few friends got together and talked about figures, paper and pencils were used by them, but my father calculated in his head and a few

minutes later gave out the answer. He would turn to them and say, "if you have any doubts as to my figures, check them out with your papers and pencils". After a while the figures produced by them were the same as my father's. He would then calmly turn to them and say "Didn't I say so?"

He surely was a wise man. Lies made him angry. If someone told him a fib about business or another matter, he would counsel that person and say "Why a lie - why a lie?"

My mother had some primary education, and was by nature artistic and a good housekeeper. Whenever her chores were done, she would turn to sewing, patchwork and handicrafts. We still have some of her works and they are much cherished.

She loved to help the needy. At one time there was a famine in Iran and it was hard to find bread or other provisions. My mother would bake some bread or gather some rice and other foods, put them under her chador, travel a long distance to friends and relatives who were in need and then make her way back.

Unfortunately, she became ill and was bed-ridden. Reading was one of her pleasures and she would read poetry from Hafez and often would tell my sister to come to her bedside and read prayers and meditation.

She had a keen interest in our education and would not allow anything to interfere in our upbringing. She would guide and encourage my sister and myself, firmly, but with loving kindness and good examples. I cannot remember, even one time, that our father and mother scolded us or raised their hand.

Surely it was because of that positive and caring way in which they told us what to do, that touched our hearts and caused us to obey them.

The way we lived was very simple, but even with those limited possibilities we had a pleasant life. My sister and I loved one another very much and followed our parents' example of accepting that humble lifestyle. We had no neighbors or playmates, therefore we played together and because of this we felt very close and enjoyed it.

I well remember that my sister sewed pieces of cloth together to make a doll and I would stuff cotton inside it and with a pencil draw eyes, eyebrows, a mouth and a nose in the image of a woman. It was here that we didn't agree. I made the doll as a female, and she didn't like that and would say, "Why didn't you draw it a mustache?"

She, like her mother, liked sewing and cooking and would cut cloth and sew her own clothes.

One day, I got a penny from my father and went to a shop close by to buy a small red-colored earthen pot with two handles. Artistic objects always attracted my attention and this small pot with a handle on each side looked very nice. I bought it and with great joy returned home. Playing with that simple pot, which was the handiwork of some artisan, gave me the same pleasure that I enjoy now seeing antiques and valuable works of art.

I believe that love and appreciation of works of art should not be related to their monetary value. It is first, the beauty and second, the artistic quality of the object that should attract us. The small pot

which was my first "objet d'art" acquisition gave me so much joy and kept me so occupied that I became interested to see how it was made. For this reason, I went to the potter's shop. The potter had a small back room where he would shape his wares and fire them in a little oven. The place fascinated me because it was there that I realized how much work goes into the making of a piece of art.

One day my sister (Photo#3) insisted on using the pot for cooking. On the one hand, I didn't want to disappoint her, nor did I want the pot to crack or break simply because I was certain that I couldn't buy a similar one at the same price. To please my dear sister, I agreed to her wish, found two bricks, and set up our own stove. I put the pot on the bricks and gathered some dry twigs, which I found in the garden. Now the moment had arrived to find the ingredients for this cookout. As my mother was against such childish doings and playing with fire, we could not count on her to give us what we needed, nor had we any money. An event or the will of God came to help us out. The kids in our block, like other neighborhoods, would use tree branches to make slingshots and shoot at the poor birds. As chance would have it, a tiny bird which had been hit by a stone from those very slingshots fell into our courtyard, bleeding. My sister rushed towards it, picked it up sorrowfully and with her small hands tried to revive it. But, it was no use. It had bled too much and after a while it died. She said "Rather than throwing it away, we'll cook it in our pot", and that is exactly what we did.

At that time, I was 6 or 7 and we both went to school. Early every morning, we'd leave the house and make our way on foot to school, which was quite a distance. They had enrolled us both in the same place, which was called "Madreseh Tarbiat" located at a crossroads called "Hassan Abbad". In those days it was considered

one of the best schools. My sister went to the girl's section and I to the boy's section. They were well separated. As I mentioned before, unfortunately, my father had no schooling and therefore could not help us in our homework. However, my mother, even though she had attended only a few classes, would do her best to aid us. In both sections of the school, there were children who were much better off than my sister and myself. Nonetheless, we were never jealous. On the contrary, we rejoiced at what they had and were happy for their well being. Our aim was to get a good education and later, work well to have a better and more successful life.

TUITION FOR SCHOOL

The tuition was about seventy pennies or about seven Tomans (about one U.S. Dollar in 1975) a year. They didn't charge us for the two months of summer holidays. In all, for the 9 years of my education, a total of 63 Tomans was paid or \$9. But even to pay those few pennies, was not easy for my father. Some months he would give me only half the amount and say, "give them this and tell them I'll pay the rest later." For this reason, the schools income was limited and a meager salary was paid to the teachers. I remember well that before the Sepah Revolution, the public sector teachers who had not been paid for several months received bricks instead of money. This was only possible because a benevolent brick maker had donated some bricks to the Ministry of Education. Because of this, the teachers didn't show up for work and the public schools were closed for a while.

To pay a few pennies for tuition was not the only problem that my father and I had. Where were we to get the money for books, pens, pencils and paper? Even so, my father got me the books, regularly and on time! Sometimes he could find cheap second and third hand books

by going to the Bazaar near the Shah Mosque. However, to find paper was my duty. Therefore, some Fridays, I would go to his shop, unwrap the paper around the bundles or cloth, cut it into writing paper size, and use it for my schoolwork. Similarly, I would use the plywood inside those same bundles of cloth to make the doors for our house. These were, for me, the very lessons of life.

THE FIRST COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY

My mother had four brothers (Photo#4). One of them had the habit of smoking. To prepare his cigarettes, he would buy a special type of tobacco that was imported from Russia, spread it in the middle of a thin square paper especially made for cigarettes, also from Russia, and then roll it, lighting it with a match that also came from Russia.

When I was a child, there were no supermarkets in Iran. But at the top of the street where we lived there were a few stores, which had the likeness of supermarkets. One of these stores sold lumber and building materials, another was a pottery, store and the third, a general store, which offered all types of wares and provisions, including tobacco, to its customers. About every two days my uncle would give me two tenths of a penny and say, "Go to the top of the street and buy me some tobacco". I had to obey and so would set off grumbling to do what I was told. Like his sister, my uncle was very kind and would give me a tenth of a penny which I kept. From these tenth-of-a-pennies and others that my father had given me, I amassed ten pennies!

The next time I went to that store, I asked the owner, "If I buy 10 pennies worth of tobacco instead of two, how much of a price difference will there be? What I mean is - How much more tobacco will you give me?" He replied, about twice as much. I said "Then give me 10

pennies worth. After this transaction, I returned to my uncle, gave him the same amount of tobacco as before and per instructions of the storekeeper, put the rest in a safe, humid corner of the kitchen. The next day, with two strings tied to the top and bottom part of an empty shoe polish can, I made a small scale. I found two weights of one gram and half a gram and whenever my dear uncle needed tobacco, I would fetch it from its hiding place, weigh it, bring it to him and collect the money! This affair continued for a long time, and its success brought me a great deal of pleasure.

BEARING WINTER'S COLD

School days went by, but believe me, there were many hardships. I went through many difficult winters, and supported the bitter cold, even though I had no overcoat, no warm underwear and no scarf. My shoes, because of rain, ice and mud had holes in them. The only thing I had was a pair of woolen mittens that my mother had knitted and which kept my hands warm while walking the long distance from home to school and back. During those cold days, my thoughts turned to springtime and summer fruits, because then I could pack my lunch box with bread, cheese and grapes, rather than the usual bread, cheese and halvah. From time to time we had something special to take to school - the previous nights meat patties that my mother would wrap in a checkered handkerchief from her native city of Kashan.

But let me say that the simple and down-to-earth life that we led was very pleasant and had a special quality. So much so that, in the future, a blanket seemed as a down quilt, an ordinary meal was like a feast and any wearable clothing had the feel of cashmere. Had my childhood been otherwise, the periods that followed would not have given me much delight or pleasure.

I now realize that it was at that period of my life that I learned the meaning of affection and the secret of success, thanks to my parents.

As my father had a limited income, he had to economize; my mother, knowing this, adapted herself and did likewise. Fortunately, they were in loving harmony in every aspect of their lives. Their aim and hope was to have a calm existence and to bring up their children in a worthy manner. They devoted everything to this goal. To them, over-reaching and waste was meaningless.

I remember one winter day, in order to buy me a pair of shoes, we went to the domed Bazaar of Teheran (Photo#5) which runs many hundreds of meters. We visited a dozen shops, just so that the best could be bought at the most reasonable price. My mother would sew her own, my sister's and my clothing with a great deal of joy and happiness. To do this gave her much pleasure.

THE HORSE-DRAWN TROLLEY CAR

From our home to school, which was far away, there was no means of transportation, therefore we had to go on foot. On some of the more important avenues they had installed rails where wagons were pulled by two horses. The "cars" had two running boards on each side, where the passengers stood in a row behind the driver. In the middle section there was a compartment where by paying a penny more, you could sit. Every few hundred meters, one of the wagons would go to a side rail to let the one coming from the opposite direction to pass. Such travel was very time consuming and slow. Quite often

the wagon wheels would jump the rails, and all the passengers would get off, and with the driver, all pleading God's help to put the "car" back on the tracks! These horse-drawn wagons, as well as the first steam powered train, which went to a southern suburb of Teheran, were put into operation by a Belgian company during the reign of the Qajar Dynasty. Later on, when the Pahlavis came to rule, this means of travel was dismantled because it caused bottlenecks in the streets of the Capitol.

The tickets were printed on green and yellow paper, to differentiate between first and second class. Even though the lowest tariff was a fraction of a penny, we couldn't afford it, and anyway, we got more exercise by walking, especially in those days that Teheran was less crowded and it was nice to go on foot.

THE TARBIAT SCHOOLS

The Baha'is had established two schools by the name of Tarbiat (education). One was for girls and the other for boys. They were renowned for their teaching methods. At the Schools, a progressive curriculum was developed to provide children and youth with a well-rounded education and at the same time teach them good behavior. Well-trained educators and teachers ran these two schools. Their full time presence and diligence was not for the little money they received, but rather because they believed that the service rendered in educating children of diverse backgrounds and religions, was a service to humanity and considered as worship.

The feeling at school was very good and although discipline was strict, it was enforced in a considerate way. Each student's work was carefully monitored, but with utmost kindness. This method of

education was very successful, not only during those school days, but even more so in later life.

There was never any physical punishment, such as using a whip, or even verbal reprimand. Counseling and proper words were used to guide the wayward child.

As mentioned before, even though the tuition was only a few pennies, my father had difficulties in paying it and often did so by installments.

In those days, no electricity was supplied to homes. Most buildings, especially schools, had big windows to let in the light. The problem of heating was solved by installing a kerosene burning, black metal stove, imported from Russia. Students had to pay the equivalent of two months tuition to buy the fuel used in those stoves. For me this was impossible.

Winter was approaching. Because of the large windows, the cold penetrated and made the rooms very chilly. The time had come to install the stoves. They were put in the front of the class near where the teacher sat. They were lit only one or two hours in the morning and even so the rooms were so cold that the students sat with their overcoats, gloves and even scarves on.

As I had fairly good grades, normally they would let me sit in the front rows. But in the winter, because I had not paid my fuel fees, they would send me to the back of the class. This was to show justice to those that had paid their bills and therefore, had a right to sit in the front rows, closer to the heater. There were no chairs, only benches

without even a backrest. The desks were simple, but had a shelf where one could place his books, papers, etc.

Gym time was two hours, once a week, and consisted of calisthenics and muscle building. These same movements were to be done at home so we could keep in shape.

The foreign language taught in those days was French. This, because the French were the first to develop a cultural exchange with Iran and promote a knowledge of Western civilization among Iranians. For this reason, the "St. Louis" and "Alliance" Schools were established, first in Teheran and later in other cities, such as Isfahan. It was during the reign of Fath-Ali Shah that Iran came to know Europe, and especially, France. Words such as "Farangi" (Foreigner) came into usage and "Farangestan" (Land of Foreigners) became synonymous with all Western nations. Due to trips made by the Qajar Kings and the Royal family, as well as wealthy youth, to France, the language and culture of that country, especially in Teheran became prominent and more literary and scientific books were translated from French than any other language. At the universities, French terms and expressions were taught in technical and scientific colleges. Most of the students who went abroad, traveled to France and upon completion of their education brought back French culture, habits and customs. As a result, most older Iranians adopted and imitated French ways in their day to day practices and activities.

During our school years, we also learned French because it was in fashion and a sign of a good education. In later years, the English and Americans too established schools in Teheran and other cities, and encouraged people to learn English. Then the Germans started

German speaking classes and soon opened a technical college using their own language.

In the Tarbiat Schools, Baha'i teachers from America taught us enough English that we could hold a conversation or read a simple text.

COLLEGE TESTS

The first six years of Tarbiat School came to an end. For the first time the Ministry of Education decided that any student who had finished Primary School should take a test in order to obtain a certificate. I went to the designated place, took the exam and fortunately, got my diploma. This was considered an important accomplishment and encouraged me to attend the seventh grade in English. I was now 13 years old and wanted to continue my education, preferably in English. But the only place that had a secondary curriculum was the "St. Louis School", a French language school, located in the middle of the city and very, very far from our home. Since there was no other choice, I decided to enroll there.

THE ST. LOUIS DAYS

Besides its great distance from where we lived, there was another problem. The tuition was much more than Tarbiat. Furthermore, the students were mostly from rich and known families, such as Farman-Farmian, Mossadegh, Pirnia, Shams, Hedjazi, etc. They came to school in their private carriages, accompanied by their governess' carrying their well provisioned lunch boxes. Needless to say, they were well received by the teachers and others.

The way these well-to-do children treated one another, was quite different from their attitude towards me and a few others like myself.

I would walk a long way in winter through ice, snow and mud up to my knees to get there. When I entered class, my face and hands, due to the cold, would be the color of a red beet! In one hand I would be carrying my books and note-papers, in the other, the well known checkered handkerchief from Kashan, containing last night's bread and some cheese or leftovers from yesterdays' meal. I well remember that most of the students who came from wealthy or noble families would bring, or have brought for them, their food in several pots, one piled on top of another and eat in the school lunchroom. But I was not admitted. There was no reason for me to go there anyway, since my lunch bag was quite meager. Needless to say that the contents of those gentlemens' pots could feed several persons, but they were not in the habit, contrary to traditional Iranian customs of hospitality and generosity, of offering and sharing. The rule they established was that each one would eat his own food.

THANKS TO AGHA JAN, THE TOBACCONIST

Necessity forced me to find a solution. In the street where the St. Louis School was situated, a shop was run by a man called Mirza Agha Jan, the cigar seller. He had a medium sized stature, was very polite and kind, had seen the ups and downs of life and had learned the meaning of generosity and amiability. He wasn't from the rich and mighty, who did not know much about the feelings of the poorer classes. He gained his family's livelihood from selling cigars and tobacco. I fixed my thoughts on his shop and a few times stopped in front of it. I didn't dare enter, for there was no reason for a 14 year old

student to go into such a place, especially since I had no intention of buying any of his wares. In my present school, as was in the Madreseh Tarbiat School, if it became known that a student even touched a cigarette, he would be thoroughly punished.

After observing that I appeared several times at the door of his shop, the owner came out and in complete friendliness asked me; "Can I do something for you? Come in." I was touched by his kindness and this gave me much courage. I said, "Yes, there is a problem that might be solved by you. My name is Habib and I live in Jenat Golshan Street. It isn't long that I have come to study at the St. Louis School. I have no place to eat my lunch. One can't eat in the classrooms. They won't let me in the lunchroom because I don't come from a noble or well to do family. I can't sit in the street and lay out my bread and cheese in my handkerchief and start to eat in front of all the passersby. It would take hours for me to go home, eat, and come back. I was wondering if I could ask your permission, without bothering or asking anything from you, to sit in a corner of your shop, have my lunch, and leave?" This good-hearted man, as if a son had asked for something from his father, smiled, and changed my hope into a reality by saying, "With pleasure, in the back of the shop, there is a small eating area, where you can enjoy your noon meal in complete tranquillity." This example of human kindness can never be forgotten and as time goes by, its effect leaves such an impression on a person's inner being, that like a holy text, one wants to pass it on to others.

THE PARADE GROUNDS

In the northwestern part of Teheran, there was a huge field called "The Training Grounds". It was here that the Army would hold its maneuvers and Reza Shah, The Great (father of Mohammed Reza

Pahlavi) reviewed the military parades. Later, it was converted into a huge public park with cafes and restaurants, a music stand, and a theater, which the masses could enjoy, especially during the pleasant Teheran nights. Many years after, Government buildings were constructed such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Officers Club, The Archaeological Museum, The Main Post Office, and one of the oil company offices, leaving no trace of that memorable park.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST AIRPLANE IN IRAN

One day in 1925, a plane hovered over Teheran piloted by a man named Kuzminski. He searched for a place to land, and chose this field. At that moment, hundreds of people climbed onto the rooftops of the stores and shops bordering that field to see their first "balloon", as a plane was called in those days. I, too, joined the crowds and found myself a rooftop. Needless to say, for people who had not even seen an automobile, the sight of an airplane landing in Teheran was unbelievable.

One of my teachers, Rashid Yassemi, was present on that occasion, and although 65 years have gone by, the memory of that exceptionally learned man is fresh in my mind. The reason? Because he helped and was kind to all of his students. You have certainly observed that if you show consideration to a child, it will certainly reflect in his attitude towards you. If you are friendly to him, he will be friendly to you. Help him, and he will be helpful. He will learn these positive traits and as a human being develop them easily and at the right time and for the rest of his life, put them into practice.

AT THE ST. LOUIS SCHOOL

The St. Louis School provided a complete curriculum for Iranian students in a well organized education program. Whether a child was poor or rich, didn't matter to the group that ran that institution. Their main aim was to offer the best, not only in teaching but also in upbringing. If a pupil didn't have the possibilities to buy books, paper, pen, pencil, etc., they would help him, directly or indirectly.

At the beginning, there were two teachers, Father Galo and Father Chatlet, both very serious and methodical. At the same time that they demanded that the students do their work as best as they could, they encouraged and rewarded their pupils with the utmost kindness.

TEACHING GHOLAM HOSSEIN MOSSADEGH

The teachers at school were aware of the financial resources of the students. They knew that my situation was difficult, and tried to find a solution. One of my classmates, Gholam Hossein Mossadegh, was the son of a very famous man (Photo#6). They contacted His Excellency Mossadegh-o-Saltaneh who agreed to give me six Tomans a month (about one U.S. Dollar) to go to his house and review the days work with his son. This sum was a big help towards my education. Every afternoon, after school closed, their carriage and his governess would come for Gholam Hossein, take him home, serve his tea and biscuits, and let him have a little rest. I in the meantime would have to walk quickly to get to their house, about two kilometers away. This social class segregation was very pronounced, not only between primary and secondary school students, but also at college level between teachers and professors. As stated before, I was not allowed to eat in

the same lunchroom as the well to do boys, even though we were classmates. Social edicts did not permit me to ride in Gholam Hossein's carriage, although I was his tutor, nor to have tea with him, after having done our homework together. These social class differences did not disturb or discourage me, for my main aim was to advance in my studies and reach higher levels of education.

His home was extremely well decorated. For me, it was wonderful to see those beautiful rugs and furnishings and have a chance to sit in those lovely chairs. With utmost happiness and in a friendly spirit, we reviewed our homework. After an hour, I would head for home. Sometimes it was warm, sometimes it was cold, but it was always after dark and the evening shadows scared me. Once in our house, which of course could in no ways be compared with Mossadegh's, I had some tea and sweets and forgot the toils and fatigue of the day. Then I enjoyed my mother's cooking, which was prepared with diligence and love.

One of the results of this simple day to day life, my mother's home cooking, and ordinary matters, was to teach me in later years to be thankful and appreciate everyone and everything. During my lifetime, I met many people from different walks of life and came to know their characters, attitudes and social position. It became clear to me that although they had everything one could ask for, they were often unhappy and dissatisfied. I asked myself; "Why is it so?" Finally, by comparing their lives with my own, I realized that during their childhood and youth, they were surrounded by such blessings and possibilities, that later on, there was nothing new or better to bring them joy and happiness. Whatever they would acquire would be tiring and boring. Yes, to appreciate water, you have to be thirsty. The thirstier you are, the more you'll cherish it. To obtain even a few

drops, you'll work hard and struggle, but eventually you'll be successful.

The point is that wealthy parents should not spoil their children. For, if their off-spring have everything easy, there will be no reason to trouble themselves to earn money or work hard to prove their capabilities.

REWARD AND PUNISHMENT

In order to encourage the students to do their utmost, both in the Tarbiat and the St. Louis schools, the teachers gave out small colored cards with various citations such as "Good", "Fair" and "Excellent." The pupil's name was written on top and had the signature of the Headmaster and stamp of the school. They were awarded either at the end of each month or on special occasions, with pomp and ceremony. Needless to say, this had an extreme effect on our morals. I too, received some of those cards, and because they were handed out on merit and not on one's social position, justice was done.

Likewise, those who didn't study well or were mischievous were punished. This meant that they had to stay after school, or during their lunch hour, to write a certain word or text hundreds of times, covering page after page. For many of my classmates, this was considered a miserable ordeal, but for me it was a blessing. For those lazy classmates of mine wanted a way out. So, they begged me to do it for them. In exchange for each page that I wrote, they would give me five blank sheets, and often added a pencil for my toils. In reality, this barter solved my problem of writing materials.

THE TITLE OF "COMMANDING GENERAL"

We had half an hour before classes and one hour after lunch for recreation. I used this time to exercise or play simple games. Some days I would be writing punishment texts for my friends. Even so, I found enough time to print a newspaper called "Witness" which would narrate the day or week's happenings, and distribute it among the pupils of our school. This contact with the student body led me to organize various groups. Among them a team was formed to exercise and drill in military fashion. Because of this, the students at the St. Louis school gave me the nickname of "Commanding General" which they still use when we see one another. Those childhood friendships, which are based on sincerity, kindness, and camaraderie, last forever and continue to give one great pleasure. For this reason, we long to have reunions and refresh our memories of those days. In 1942 I went to the USA, and when I came back to Iran in 1947, I invited the students of St. Louis and Father Galo, who had now become headmaster, for a dinner at Darband Hotel. We all realized that it was the close ties established in those early days of our lives that makes us happy when we get together.

DEAR UNCLE'S BICYCLE

If you recall, I was tutoring Gholam Hossein Mossadegh¹ and getting six Tomans (about 80 cents) a month which was a great help for my schooling. This money plus ten Tomans, which I had saved would now be put to good use.

¹ Dr. Mossadegh, the father of Gholam Hossein, was the Prime Minister who nationalized the Iranian oil industry.

As stated before, I had four uncles. One of them, Rahim Khan Arjomand, the father of Khalil, Eskandar, and Siavoush, founded the famous Arj and Shole Khavar Factories. Mr. Arjomand was very kind, precise, knowledgeable, and had a good memory. He started as a clerk in the offices of the Post and Telegraph and in a short time became the Under-Secretary of that Ministry and was sent as Iran's Delegate to international postal conferences.

In his youth, he had bought a bicycle which served him well, but now, because of his high position, Rahim Khan didn't ride it anymore and had hung it on a wall in his cellar. Many parts of this bicycle had become rusty and it didn't have tires. However, I felt that even though it has so many defects, I'll be able to fix and use it. I asked my uncle to give it to me so I could save it from exile. He said he would agree, but only if I handed him nine Tomans. i. e. buy it for that sum.

Of course at that moment I was disappointed that my dear uncle wanted me to pay for that piece of junk, but because I needed it and the price was not too high, I accepted. It was later that I realized that what my uncle had done was absolutely right. The fact that he did not give the bicycle away free, taught me something, for which I am grateful. The lesson is that a person should be compensated for his work or product and should not offer it free just because someone expects a favor or puts him "on the spot." Likewise, others should also accept to pay for what they obtain and not always count on getting things free or benefiting from people's generosity. Of course there are exceptions. Helping out and being big hearted at the right time, are meritorious examples of a real human being, as is the act of accepting such.

TOLSTOY

The bicycle affair with my uncle and this question of paying for something reminds me of an interesting story. The scene is a Russian city. A lady gets off the train and starts to look for a porter to carry her baggage to a horse-drawn carriage. She spots a respectable-looking man. "Don't delay", she says to herself, "he is a good porter". She calls him and orders that he carry her bag to a taxi carriage which was waiting for a fare. The man without the slightest hesitation, picks up the heavy bag and puts it into the vehicle. The lady gives him three Rubles and tells the driver to start the horses. But the story doesn't end here. While starting to move, the driver turns around and says, "Madame, you surely didn't recognize what an important and famous person acted as your porter!" Her reply, "No, wasn't he a porter?" The driver in a loud voice and laughing tells her, "My dear lady - that was Tolstoy, the well-known Russian philosopher, writer and educator, who is much admired and loved by the people of all of Russia." The lady, regretting her mistake, tells the driver to turn the carriage around and catch up with Tolstoy. Fortunately, he had not gotten far. The lady, in excusing herself, asked for his pardon, admitting her ignorance as to his identity. Tolstoy, even though from a noble family, never expected such apologies, and in a kindly manner, which was the key to his character, replies, "My dear lady, doing work in any form makes me proud. I carried your bag with the utmost joy and was amply rewarded by three Rubles. Moreover, when a few drops of sweat from my brow fell on your suitcase, I better appreciated the compensation that I received for my work. Therefore, why should you feel ashamed or feel that you have to apologize? Please continue to your destination without any discomfort."

By selling his bicycle, my uncle too taught me a lesson. That day nine Tomans was no problem, especially since it was money that I had saved from tutoring young Mossadegh.

I paid cash and began to clean and repair it. Just to get rid of the rust, took a whole week of scrubbing with sandpaper and kerosene. There still remained the hard job of repairing it and finding two tires. Finally, it had to be painted, a matter about which I knew nothing!

On a street called "Gaslight", (later, "Electric Light", later, "Amir Kabir"), although very narrow, horse drawn carriages went up and down. Along this street, two Baha'i brothers ran a carpentry shop and a bicycle store, side by side. The older brother's name was Mohammed Reza Khan, the younger, Mohammed Taghi Khan. The word "Khan" dates from the Turkish and Mogul invasions and has crept into Farsi (the language of Iran or Persia of old). Even at the beginning of the Pahlavi Dynasty, it was used as a title of respect. Later, on orders from Reza Shah Pahlavi, (the father of the last Monarch of Iran), it was abandoned.

The aforementioned brothers chose the family name "Tom" when identity cards were established in modern Iran. (Photo#7)

Mohammed Taghi Khan was a very capable mechanic. Even though he had no formal education in this field, through observation and a quick mind, he became an expert in technical matters. In those days, there were no motorcycles or automobiles - only bicycle repairs.

The older brother, Mohammed Reza Khan, was very smart and his specialty was making violins, which became renowned and were bought and sold at a high price. Both brothers, besides being hard

workers and very talented, were very polite, honest, and had a high standard of morality. Their aim was to perform high quality work and render service to humanity.

On one of those days that I didn't have to tutor young Mossadegh, I went directly from school to Mohammed Taghi Khan's bicycle store and lingered for a while. While there, I observed the various operations needed to repair a bicycle and overheard some of the remarks and demands of the customers. For example "Put some air in the tires," "The bell doesn't ring," "The brakes on my bike don't work," "The pedal has fallen off," etc. etc. A busy place - A lot of work. People coming and going all the time. Mohammed Taghi Khan, with only two apprentices who couldn't even read or write, did all the repairs and at a fast pace. They would get one or two pennies per job and send off their customers very happy and satisfied.

A thought came to my mind and that was to meet the shop owner. I had doubts about doing it or not doing it. Should I speak to him or not? Should I tell him my problem? Should I give him my suggestions, or forget about the whole thing? I said to myself, "This man seems very polite and moreover, is very much occupied with his work; yet doesn't have enough workers - it's better that I have a discussion with him".

With great faith, I went forward and said, "Sir, may I have a few words with you? My name is Habib. I am a student at the St. Louis School. I bought a bicycle that needs to be put in order. It has no tires, and I don't even know the price of tires and inner tubes". He said, "two Tomans, and with the other things to be done, it will cost you a total of 5 Tomans, but you need pay only 4.6 Tomans." I said, "I have no money! But if you agree, please give me two tires and repair

the bicycle and in place of money, I'll come and work for you two afternoons per week plus all day Fridays until my account is settled. Be sure that I already have some experience, having repaired my own bicycle. You can test me and after that, accept my proposition."

As he was a self-made man, very kind, and knew how it feels to have no money, he appreciated the meaning of helping others. Therefore, he accepted my proposition and from the next day on, two afternoons a week, I would go there directly and work with a great deal of enthusiasm. He gave me the tires and my bicycle became operational. It took me back and forth to school and Dr. Mossadegh's house.

At the shop, I persevered hard and showed much interest in my work. Because of my schooling, I was able to spot the problems faster than the other trainees and therefore, put things right rather quickly. My boss showed his appreciation by offering me a full time job with good pay. Because my time was limited, and the hours spent there were only to pay for the tires and inner tubes, I had to refuse this kind gentleman's offer.

One afternoon, as I entered Dr. Mossadegh's home, the Governess said, "After you have finished your tutoring, the Doctor wants to see you." This made me very happy as Gholam Hossein had done well in his studies and his teachers were quite satisfied. I thought to myself that because of this, the Doctor will surely give me a good reward today. Will it be money? Clothing? An overcoat, or something else?

After our session, I said to the Governess, "The tutoring has finished. I am ready to see the Dr." My joy was ever increasing. She

left and came back saying, "Come into the Dr.'s room." I went into his study, which was a fairly large room, with a high ceiling, decorated with lovely plaster-work. The floor was covered by a beautiful carpet and Dr. Mossadegh was sitting on a mattress hidden under a rug with pillows behind it, as backrests. I bowed. He acknowledged with a polite gesture. He then said "I am satisfied with the tutoring you gave to Gholam Hossein. But because his studies have improved, from tomorrow on, you don't have to come anymore." Considering that I was expecting something else, these words for me were like the bomb that exploded on Hiroshima.

Gholam Hossein had a younger sister, named Mansoureh, who in later years married Dr. Matin Dafftari, a Minister of Justice, and at one time, Prime Minister under Reza Shah. She would sit in when her brother and I did our homework together, saying she too wanted to learn French. She would listen and sometimes ask questions about certain words. From time to time, Mansoureh would bring us tea and sweets.

Hearing Dr. Mossadegh's words, I became very upset, for the money I received for tutoring his son was used to pay for my education. What would I do now? Tears came to my eyes. He noticed this, but didn't show any sorrow, nor did he say anything. I said, "In that Gholam Hossein's marks have improved and that you are content, makes me very happy and I feel a sense of pride. His teachers too have expressed their satisfaction and have told me so. I didn't expect much more than that, but what you paid me was a big help towards my schooling and now all of a sudden, to be deprived of it, will cause a great hardship. I would like to make a suggestion: since there are only two months left before the end of the school year, permit me to tutor both of your children, for the same amount of six Tomans (less than

one dollar) per month.” The Dr., realizing my situation and needs, accepted my proposal.

It was now 1918. The school year had ended and so had World War I. Everyone was happy and I shared in that general joy. More than that, I was privileged to own a suitable bicycle that added to my bliss. Yes, there are some who have palaces and own luxurious means of travel, but don't appreciate them. For me, who had almost nothing, this old bicycle which had been repaired with so much care, brought the greatest happiness.

This bicycle, which had a light, a bell and a horn, attracted a lot of attention, especially among the children in our block. When they heard it coming, they would come out and surround it, asking such questions as, "How does it work? Can I ring the bell? Can I squeeze the horn? Can you take us for a ride?"

After a while, the parents would appear and ask if I could teach their sons to ride a bicycle, offering to pay for the lessons. It was a good idea, which I readily accepted. They paid a penny an hour to learn to ride a bike. Needless to say, there were many customers.

To teach bicycle riding at that rate brought me a good income and also left me some free time to do better things. So, I went to Mohammed Taghi Khan's bicycle shop and, in gratitude for his help when I had needed it, offered to repair bicycles, free of charge. Often, we had lunch together, eating the stew that they cooked in a small clay pot.

THE FIRST MOTORCYCLE IN IRAN

One day, while working in Mohammad Taghi Khan's shop, I spotted a motorcycle, which my boss was examining very closely. He wanted to know what each part did and especially how the motor worked. The owner of the motorcycle only knew how to ride it and had no knowledge of its mechanical aspects. Therefore, he needed someone to learn its secrets and be able to repair it in due course. In a short time, Mohammed Taghi Khan acquainted himself with the various parts of the motorcycle and even rode it up and down the street.

ACROBATICS IN THE PRESENCE OF AHMAD SHAH

Mohammed Taghi Khan rode a bicycle so well that he could even do acrobatics with it. One day he was invited to the Shah's Palace, located in Farah Abbad (North East of Teheran) to perform for Ahmad Shah Qhajar² and the Crown Prince, Mohammed Hassan Mirza.

On the appointed day, I joined him. We went through the vegetable gardens of the North, where the wonderful smell of cucumbers filled the air. We entered His Majesty's compound. I saw the last Qhajar King. He was short in stature and had black eyebrows and black eyes. He wore a black sheepskin hat that had a medallion bearing the Imperial Coat of Arms sewn on it. Mohammed Hassan Mirza, the Crown Prince, too, was short, wore a similar hat, but without the imperial emblem and had a jacket with golden lion and sun buttons.

The acrobatic show pleased the Qhajar Shah and the Crown Prince and both smiled. During the performance, the Shah ordered a servant to bring him a handkerchief. He went and brought back a

neatly folded handkerchief on a plate. His Majesty, with a loud sound, blew his nose and placed the handkerchief on the plate. I thought to myself that a handkerchief doesn't have to be put on a plate, or have to go through such a ceremony! It was later that I found out that such things are part of courtly practices and demands of an era gone by. What's more, paper handkerchiefs did not exist at that time, and maybe tradition had it that a monarch was not supposed to have a handkerchief in his pocket.

On our way back, Mohammad Taghi Khan told me about a family from Rasht (Northwest of Iran) called Ebtehaj and about one of their sons named Abol Hassan Khan who was very generous and had helped many of his fellow citizens, including my boss. I realized that appreciation and gratitude are signs of a great man. Not only did I learn technical subjects from Mohammed Taghi Khan, but also good manners, and especially how to be helpful to people and show friendship to all. From him I learned the pleasure of being kind and rendering service to God's creation. Through the years, it has become very clear to me that humans are thirsty for love and cannot support animosity or negative attitudes.

MOTORCYCLES WERE ON THE INCREASE IN IRAN

Slowly, the number of motorcycles increased and the only place that could service or repair them was the bicycle shop of Mohammad Taghi Khan. It was there that my mechanical knowledge increased and in a short time I too was able to service and repair motorcycles.

As mentioned before, the first World War had just ended, and foreign troops, the English in particular, were evacuating. The British

² This was the dynasty before the Pahlavis.

Army had a depot in Ghazvin, (about 100 kms west of Teheran) where munitions and a small quantity of vehicles, especially Ford pick-ups, were stored. One day a person came to the shop and informed Mohammad Taghi Khan that there are a number of practically new cars and small trucks for sale, but so far no buyers had come forth. The man insisted that Mohammad Taghi Khan go to Ghazvin and buy one of these pick-ups.

The decision to go or not to go was difficult because in Iran of 1918, no one had an automobile except the Russian Embassy. Therefore, no one knew how to drive a car, there were no spare parts and no one knew how to repair one. For these reasons, there was no buyer of a car, let alone a pick-up! Another reason was that there were no roads and the available paths had pot-holes, crossed water trenches, no bridges existed over rivers, etc., etc. The paths were only good for caravans, horse drawn carriages, donkeys, etc. and could not be used by a vehicle.

The middle-man, who wanted the deal to go through, insisted that if Mohammad Taghi Khan bought a car, he would become the owner of the first private car in Iran. This idea made my friend's eyes flash. But, in addition to the difficulties mentioned before, there was another more important one, he did not have enough money! I suggested to the man that he return in a few days and maybe we'll find a solution by then.

I felt that a quick decision was not right. Even from childhood, I believed that one should not be in a hurry to give a reply but rather study the situation and think well before giving a negative answer. Better still, one should try to find a solution, for there is greater pleasure and satisfaction in finding a way rather than saying 'no'.

I told Mohammad Taghi Khan that sooner or later, automobiles will be brought to Teheran and other cities of Iran and will become commonplace. Therefore, to be the first seems logical. He replied that technical and monetary reasons made it difficult. I said, "There is no one more experienced than you in mechanical matters, you're well suited for this. Regarding the financial aspect, let's first go to Ghazvin, inspect the vehicle, ask the price, and then find the solution. Even if we don't buy it, we'll have taken a small trip and added to our knowledge."

My boss agreed and a few days later when the middle-man showed up, we arranged to meet him at the depot. Mohammad Taghi Khan and I went to Ghazvin, which is about 100 kilometers away, on our bicycles and found the British camp located outside of that town. There were hundreds of piles of all sorts of war materials.

In a corner, under the sun, three Ford pick-ups, which had two seats in the front and a space for goods in the back, could be seen. Although neither one of us had any experience to differentiate a good car from a bad one, we headed for the one that looked better than the others and had good tires and asked the price.

The reply was, "150 Tomans" (about 25 Dollars). At that time, this amount was high, but for such a vehicle, it seemed reasonable. We looked at one another. Can we put together such a sum? My companion said, "I have 100 Tomans, so we lack 50!" In those days, anyone who had 100 Tomans was considered rich and creditworthy. You know well that money by itself is not a sign of character or the importance of a person. For there are many rich people who have little manners or human qualities.

Anyway, Mohammad Taghi Khan already had 100 Tomans and 50 was lacking. What should be done? I remarked that he had many friends back in Teheran. Maybe he could borrow 50 Tomans from one or two of them. He said that was a good idea, let's go back to Teheran and discuss it with some of them.

Regarding borrowing, there are various opinions and ideologies. In Islam and some other religions, it is permitted, moreover, such an act is a sign of generosity and true friendship.

For the matter of buying the pick-up, a loan was imperative. He was able to get the needed money from a Mr. Borhan and his close friends. With 150 Tomans in our pockets, and a great deal of caution for carrying such a great sum, we returned to Ghazvin. We asked for a discount on the price. We tried to bargain. Nothing doing. The seller was not Iranian. The price was fixed. My boss handed him the 150 Tomans and became the owner of a Ford pick-up, which he didn't know how to drive. What to do? How does one start it up? How to take it to Teheran? Once there, where would we garage it?

This reminded me of a story about a Maharajah who went to Rome to visit his former teacher, living in a modest house. Upon his return to India, His Majesty sent his host an elephant in appreciation of his hospitality. The man didn't know how to feed or where to keep an elephant. What was he to do with this valuable gift? Finally, he gave it to the Zoo and cleared his conscience vis-à-vis the kindness of the Maharajah. A poem from Saadi says, "Either don't befriend an elephant keeper or build a place to house the elephant!"

TAKING THE VEHICLE TO TEHERAN

The phrase "necessity is the mother of invention" was put to test. I suggested that we hire two horses, tie the pick-up to them like a carriage, and in this way take it to Teheran.

This idea worked well and after a few days, the pick-up was in front of the bicycle shop. Then we pushed and pulled it inside. There, my mentor went to work, and day and night, spent his time in finding out its mechanical secrets and eventually, how it functions. He would do and undo various parts until finally, he was able to start the engine. But he did not dare take it out or drive it.

As mentioned before, the Russian Embassy had the only automobile in Teheran. From time to time, its driver would come to the shop to repair parts or discuss matters. This time, Mohammed Taghi Khan went to seek his help and after a little practice, learned how to drive. This "new" driver would take the pick-up out and bring it back. But, upon arriving in front of the shop, he would stop the engine and we would have to push it inside! The reason for this was that he feared hitting the doors or the walls or the brakes not taking hold.

The vehicle was painted from top to bottom and ready for work. The question now was that after all that great investment and trouble, how could it be used?

TO SEE AN AUTOMOBILE

Because in those days an automobile was considered a miraculous invention, group after group came to see the above mentioned pick-up. They would stare at it and ask such questions as:

“What is the mirror for?; How does it start and how does it move?; Does it burn wood or kerosene or coal?; How does it cross rivers?; What if it stops in the middle of a river?”; etc., etc.

Peoples’ curiosity and the desire to see an automobile and even more, to ride one was unbelievable. We too, were considering ways of how best to benefit from it. Should it be used to transport goods? Should it carry passengers? Should we keep it for our own use? Seeing that people were anxious to ride a car, I suggested that we take off the back platform and build a cabin with seats in its place to carry passengers.

We asked Mohammed Reza Khan, the brother of my mentor, who was a capable carpenter, to build a wooden body. He said bring me a picture and with the help of ironsmiths and coach builders, we’ll put something good together. And so they did. In four months the pick-up was transformed into a station wagon.

Now, we had to find a way to exploit this car. I suggested that we take it to a central square in the middle of Teheran, park it in a favorable spot, and offer to give rides at 5 or 6 cents a person, transporting them to the suburb of Tajrish, Gholhak or just around town. This idea became a reality and soon there were dozens of people waiting in line to: "Have a ride in an automobile."

SUMMER VACATIONS IN GHOLHAK

In the north of Teheran, at the foot of the Alburz Mountains, a vacation spot developed by the name of Shemranat, the best area being Gholhak, because of its cool, pure air and a murmuring river which passed through it. In the summer, when Teheran became very hot,

thousands of people would flock to it, using every means possible. The wealthy would go in private carriages, others by horse, but the majority would get on donkeys and trek their way up hill to this most inviting paradise. Incidentally, the British had chosen this location for their summer residence.

On Thursday afternoons (which is like Saturday in Western countries) or the beginning of weekends, Mohammed Taghi Khan's automobile ran a shuttle between Teheran and Gholhak. The fares he collected in two days was more than the 150 Tomans he paid for the pick-up. He got a great deal of pleasure and also made good money, which led me to think that other things could be done in relation to Gholhak.

I suggested that a bicycle shop be set up in Gholhak during the summers, for which I would accept the responsibility. I would repair bikes, teach how to ride one, and rent them to people who wanted a means of getting about. More importantly, on the days that vacationers wanted to go back to work, we would rent them a bicycle, they would ride it down hill to Teheran, deposit them at the downtown shop, and we would place the bikes on top of, or on the side of the auto and bring them up to be ready for another rental. He agreed, and soon an ideal place, well located, was rented for 12 cents a month, and the activities began. After work I would sleep in the shop and as expected, there was a big demand for bicycles and so I was not only busy during the summer but also had a good income.

From time to time, Mohammed Taghi Khan would bring the auto to the Gholhak shop and I would add water to the radiator or splash water on the wooden spokes of the wheel so they would not dry out. Soon I learned to drive the car and often I replaced him in the run

between Teheran and Gholhak, but for his account. I had to be very careful and avoid accidents. One day I missed hitting a horse-driven trolley by just a few centimeters, and said "Thank God" that nothing happened.

It was the year 1920, I was 17, and the summer was ending. School would begin soon. Although my tutoring fees from Dr. Mossadegh had ended, I was not worried for I had a good bicycle, had learned to drive a car, learned a little about mechanics, was accepted by my mentor, and now it was time to continue my education.

In this same year, an insurance and transport company had imported 4 automobiles made by Willys Overland. They were for sale, but no one came to buy one because no one knew how to drive, and they were gathering dust. Then one day a Mr. & Mrs. Assef Saltaneh, members of a prominent family and the parents of Amir Houshang Davaloo, considered buying one of them. Lack of a driver was the big problem. So they contacted my mentor for a solution. He introduced me for the job because he was so busy with his car, repairs of bicycles and motorcycles, etc. that he did not even have a few hours free.

Sometime later, Mr. Mirza Ahmed Ghazvini, who changed his family name to Rassekh, and was the father of Dr. Shahpour Rassekh, contacted me. Mr. Ghazvini supervised the estates and business affairs of Mr. Assef Saltaneh. He told me that His Grace is thinking of buying one of those four cars and is looking for a driver. Do you want and will you accept such a job?

I replied, "I like working and being busy especially driving, but I am going to school and that, for me, comes first." However, I could work from Thursday noon to Saturday morning, which is the weekend.

Mr. Rassekh agreed and fixed a monthly salary of 50 Tomans. Then we went to take delivery of the car, which was painted black, and for which he paid 750 Tomans. I drove it to their home and at first it was housed in the carriage building. Later, they built a garage in a corner of the garden.

During the week, I went to St. Louis School, and on Thursday afternoons and Fridays, drove the family and their guests to Gholhak, or Tajrish. In addition to my salary, Mrs. Assef Saltaneh would tip me with a few gold coins, as did some of their guests.

The two sons of this noble family, Amir Houshang and Ghassem Khan, loved to go for a drive. From the moment that I arrived, they would be with me, treating me with tea and sweets and often offered me lunch and dinner. Their parents too were very generous and during the one year that I was with them I felt completely at home.

Mrs. Assef Saltaneh told me not to let her sons get behind the wheel, or even try to drive the car. The only other person that was allowed to get near the car was the gardener and then, to clean it. So, the car was parked in its garage five days a week, and all eagerly awaited Thursday afternoons, when it would come out to be driven and enjoyed.

THE FIRST TRIP TO GHAZVIN

Mr. Assef Saltaneh, who had the title of "Jenab" (Sir), wanted to travel by automobile to his estates in Ghazvin, accompanied by his advisor, Mirza Ahmed Rassekh. But Mrs. Saltaneh was fearful that their automobile would suffer too much. I accepted the task and on a holiday we set out for Ghazvin. The so called "road" was an enemy for

the automobile, for it was dusty, full of pot holes and plenty of curves. Ditches and sometimes small rivers had to be crossed. But with the utmost care and vigilance, we made the 100 or so kilometers in eight hours. I had to stop every so often to check the tires and make sure they were not over-heated or punctured, as well as to check the oil and water levels. Coming back was the same, except that I had received a box of rice cookies and pistachios to take to my parents.

STREET CLEANING IN OLD TEHERAN

My first year of service to the Assef Saltaneh family ended and during this time, all the salary and gold coins that I got were entrusted to Mirza Ahmed Rassekh for safe keeping. In reality, my driving experience and these savings were my assets.

Since there were only three automobiles in Teheran in 1918, lack of rules and regulations permitted free circulation. Yet on the other hand, there were few streets suitable for easy passage. In winter there was snow, ice, and mud and in the summer, dust would hamper easy driving. To reduce the dust level, the municipality had workers, carrying large goatskin pouches filled with water, go up and down the main streets and avenues to spray them. Some shop-keepers would even tip them to spray water in front of their stores.

Someone came up with the idea of taking large barrels, putting them on horse drawn chariots, attaching a long water pipe drilled with holes in them, and thus spray the thoroughfares. Old and young were fascinated with this innovation. Later on, the municipality bought a specially constructed tank truck for this important job!

Many remember that in those days Teheran did not have a piped water system. There were large "Qhanats" or springs with an abundance of water in the north of the city.

By gravity, the water would flow through a network of open ditches on both sides of the streets. In the cellar of homes, buildings, stores, etc. a water reservoir was built to store water. Underground ceramic pipes were used to conduct the water from the ditches to the reservoirs. To do this, one had to stand in front of his house, usually late at night when the water was cleanest, dam the ditch, thus diverting the water into his house, and when his reservoir was filled, open the way for his neighbor to get his share. You can imagine what confusion, bickering and shouting took place. Patience became a virtue and even the trees had to wait their turn.

Thursdays were our block's turn and my father would have to stay up all night if need be until our reservoir was filled. Otherwise there would be a shortage of water for a whole week.

THE FIRST ELECTRICAL POWER PLANT IN TEHERAN

I spoke about Teheran's unlit, dark streets before. There was no electricity and the matter was of such importance that the first street where electric lamps were installed was named "Electric Lamp Avenue." The first generating plant was put up by a man named Haj Mehdi Amin who also was the manager of the coin minting factory under Nasseradin-Shah. The engine was coal fired and produced steam power, which ran the generator. Initially it produced just enough electricity for the above mentioned street, a square and some bordering houses. Other thoroughfares were either dark or lit by small kerosene lamps hung on walls or poles.

THE TELEPHONE

The telephone was just introduced and was not available to all. Cabins with one phone and an operator were installed at some important crossroads. These were considered as local telephone posts and people would go there and pay the attendant 2 or 3 pennies depending on the time and distance of the call. The operator then would call the central office, stating the name of the person on the other side and once connected, the call would go through. The number of subscribers and the network was so limited, that names were used and not numbers.

AUTOMOBILES AND NAILS

Traffic or bottlenecks did not exist in those days. The biggest problem in driving were the nails that had come off the donkeys' and horses' hooves and littered the streets and roads, and continually punctured the tires. Vehicles were not equipped with spare tires or lights.

For example, when the car got a puncture between Teheran and Gholhak, I would stop on the spot, take out the spare inner tube which was stored under my seat, change it with the one that had a hole in it, and with a hand-operated air pump fill it with air. One person alone could not manage this task. So, all the passengers, regardless of their social position, including women with their chadors (head to foot veils) would get off and help. Not only because they thought it was a humanly act, but more, to get going again and benefit from their automobile outing.

Pedestrians, seeing or hearing a car, would remain on the sidewalk, looking at it with awe, not daring to cross the street.

MASS TRANSPORTATION

The peoples' desire to travel by automobiles was on the increase, mostly to Shiraz, Esfahan, Baghdad, etc., but in particular, to a Caspian Sea resort called "Andali", which was later renamed "The Port of Pahlavi".

They would contact Mohammed Taghi Khan, but he, because of the bicycle store and a dozen other activities, would refuse their request for transportation. I too, being busy with my studies, and especially perfecting my French, could not find the time to drive them to where they wanted to go.

Summer vacation was approaching and I wanted to use my driving abilities and make the most of it. Working for the Assef Saltaneh family was part time and the income was limited. I didn't want to ask my father for money, for what little he made was to provide our household needs and to buy medicine and pay doctor's bills for my mother who was sick and by now bed-ridden. Her doctor's name was Arastoo Hakim, whose family name later became Hakim. In those days it was difficult to diagnose certain sicknesses and all we could do was to pray to God for her well-being. My sister would do the cooking, washing and in reality took over the chores as well as looking after our mother. She exceeded our expectations.

A PROMISING PERIOD AS A DRIVER AND A PROPOSAL TO BUY A FORD SEDAN

It was the year 1921. I was 18 years old and was looking for something to do during the school holidays. One day, a man came to the bicycle shop and told us that a foreign trading company in Tabriz (a Northwestern town) was leaving Iran and had a Ford sedan for sale. Could you find a customer? I said that there are two Willys Overland cars waiting to be bought for the last two years. Who is going to buy a used Ford? He replied that it's not so old and what's more, there are several tires, springs and spare parts, all of which, with the car could be bought for 500 Tomans.

I asked, "Where is the car?" He said, "In Tabriz". I suggested that the car, spares, etc. be brought to Teheran for a close look. He agreed on condition that there be a potential buyer. For some reason or other, at that very moment, I decided to buy it myself and told him so. In a weeks time, the car and all the equipment and the manager of the company, who was English, appeared in a private warehouse in Teheran. I examined the lot and again asked the total price. The answer was "500 Tomans". I asked for a discount, to which he replied that according to instructions from the head office, he could not sell it for a penny less.

I accepted and it was agreed that in a few days I would bring the money and take delivery. The amount that I had saved came to 487 Tomans, all of which was kept by my "Banker" Mirza Ahmed Rassekh. So I rushed to him and asked for my money. Contrary to my belief, he said that he did not have all that in cash, and it would take some time to get it.

He was right, for in those days coins were in circulation far more than paper notes. The few notes that were used, were those printed during the time of Nasser Edin Shah and were valid only in the city whose name they bore. A Teheran bill was not valid in Shiraz, for example. Bills of Exchange and Drafts were used for large transactions and then only through reputable merchants.

Notwithstanding all of this, I became disturbed and explained to Mr. Rassekh that if I did not give the money on time, I would lose the car. Being a businessman he understood me and promised to provide the needed amount in a short period.

Then I went home and told my father and mother about this transaction. They became very unhappy and said, "You want to pay 500 Tomans which is a fortune to buy a car? What is a car good for?" I explained that it would be used for renting. At this, they became angry for they were against this type of work in the first place. But with the explanations that I gave, their unhappiness diminished.

Then I told my father that I am short of 13 Tomans. Could he lend it to me? Because he was against my buying the car, he simply said, "I don't have such money." I approached my uncles. They too turned me down. Maybe I could borrow from Mohammed Taghi Khan? I gave up that thought for I had a better idea! An idea that relieved me from the burden of a loan.

Once I had my own 487 Tomans, I went to the seller and told him that I have only this sum. He thought that I was still asking for a discount and said, "I told you before, I can't accept a penny less. Bring the remaining 13 Tomans and then you can take delivery of the car and all its spares." I proposed that he keep a few of the tires and some

parts as guarantee for the 13 Tomans, until such time as I gather the rest of the money. He accepted and the deal was done. The car was mine. I drove it to our house and parked it in front of the house. By now crowds were gathering, especially kids. I splashed it with a few pails of water and gave it a thorough cleaning. The kids helped me with this work, because it is in the nature of youth to help one another. To thank them, I gave them all a ride around the block. The sun was setting and it would soon be night. My thoughts went to where shall I garage the car?

Across from our house, there was a huge estate that belonged to a famous, rich family called "Borhan-E-Dowlleh", who were well known during the Qhajar Dynasty. It was this same person, nearing the end of his life, who decided to parcel out his vast lands and distribute them to teachers and those who worked for the Ministry of Education.

Within this large garden, there was a huge covered hall, which could accommodate several horse-drawn carriages. As usual, necessity led me to find a solution. I called upon the caretaker, explained to him that I needed a place to keep my car and could he ask his boss' permission? He came back and announced that Mr. Boran-E-Dowleh had agreed with great kindness to my request. In turn, I said, "Please thank him and tell him that he should consider the car as his own and it would give me much joy to drive him wherever and whenever he so desired".

Next morning, I took the car to the Central Square of Teheran, parked it in front of the Post and Telegram Building, to await the passengers that would want to travel between Teheran and Qholhak. It wasn't long before people paid 5 Rials just to ride around the Square. The fare to Qholhak was a little more - about 6 Rials. Within three

days, I had amassed over 100 Tomans. My father and mother, upon hearing this, became concerned, asking "From whom and where did you get so much money?" They couldn't believe that this sum was collected in only three days from a car to whose purchase they had protested a short while ago.

THE FIRST TRIP TO THE PORT OF ANZALI

There was a great deal of demand to travel to places outside of Teheran. Five persons wanted to go to Ghazvin and the Port of Anzali. I accepted to drive them. Two were students who were in a hurry to catch a boat from Anzali to Baku. They paid a fare of 30 Tomans. Not knowing what the real cost would be, I accepted, saying to myself that at least I'll learn something, do some sightseeing and maybe find some passengers for the return trip. Gasoline was imported from Russia in 16 liter cans and sold for 8 pennies in Teheran. It was said that in Anzali it would cost only 7 pennies. So off we went, trusting in God!

Since there was no baggage compartment, we tied the suitcases, blankets, mattresses, utensils, oil lamps, etc. to the running boards and everything else had to rest on the passenger's laps. We took several days supply of food and water with us, because no one was sure what provisions could be found along the way, let alone a safe place to rest or sleep.

It was early dawn and the air was fresh when we started off for Ghazvin, praying we would reach town by nightfall. The trail was dusty. We crossed dozens of hills and valleys. Some curves were very dangerous and only one river had a bridge, if you could call it that. Our first stop was the village of Mehr-Abad where the passengers

descended, stretched their legs, washed the dust off their hands and faces while I checked the oil, tires, and radiator water.

One should mention that these "Rest Areas" date back several millennia when riders on fast horses carried messages from one point to another throughout the vast Persian Empire. Later, caravans used them for overnight stops and in recent times, horse-drawn carriages would find food and lodging therein.

The second stop was Karaj where the only building was a control shack used by the gendarmerie (militia). Here again, I inspected the car, and with the help of the passengers, repaired a flat tire. Soon we were on our way and reached Ghazvin at about 4:00 PM. This town is very old and has a long history. It served as the capital of the Safavi Dynasty and many monuments and sites remain to this very day.

While listening to the conversations between the passengers, I kept a close eye on the road and around dusk, decided that the next village called Lowshan was where we would spend the night. The bedding was spread out close to a brook, the food brought from Teheran was shared, the samovar (tea pot) lighted and small glasses filled with tea were served to all. It was a most pleasant evening because the stars were shining, the brook was murmuring, the glow of the samovar fire and the peace and quiet were all symbols of a different way of life, that brings back sentimental memories.

At the first signs of dawn we packed our belongings and headed for Rasht. Soon we arrived at one of the tributaries of the great Sefidrood River. Since there was no bridge, the passengers very kindly got off to lighten the car and waded across the stream.

Then came a big test because the next few dozen kilometers were all down hill, the road very narrow and with over ten curves. I used the hand brake, as well as the foot brakes and with much holding of our breath and saying prayers, we reached the bottom - safe and sound.

Within half an hour, we arrived at Manjil, a village with a few houses, a teahouse and one general store. This place is well known for its green olives, olive oil, smoked fish, garlic bulbs hanging from the ceiling, candles, etc. Munjil is probably the windiest region of Iran. The speed of wind sometimes reaching over a hundred kilometers per hour, shaking everything in its path.

However, the residents of this village were very hospitable and quickly gathered around our car, offering tea and sweets. They were happy to see us, maybe because there were not many travelers who passed through, especially in a horseless carriage.

We resumed our trip, but not without fear, for the passages were narrow, the curves sharp, and the ditches numerous. At one point, I had to tell the passengers to refrain from talking too much, as their chatter might absorb me and this might lead to an accident. From then on, silence prevailed. We stopped every 50 or 60 kilometers to check the car from top to bottom. Thanks be to God that the vehicle was new and well built.

Suddenly, the scene changed and from dusty plains and mountainous passages we entered the forest of Gilan with its lush vegetation. Now our concern was not to get lost and to reach Resht as soon as possible.

All of a sudden we came to a rather broad river. Fortunately, there was a teahouse and a few huts. The locals told us that there were large, sharp stones on the river bed and that the car might get damaged in trying to cross it. What should be done? In the spirit of cooperation and hospitality, two or three of them volunteered to wade the river, remove the boulders and clear a path. The passengers got off and waited in a hut, while those brave men did their job. They even pushed the car to the other side. Then they carried my passengers piggy-back across the river. No matter how much I insisted, they would not accept any money for their troubles. In those days people served and helped one another as a way of life and not for compensation.

ENTRY INTO RESHT

It was late afternoon when we arrived in Resht, a large, well placed and progressive city. Because the two students did not want to miss their ship, we left the sightseeing for our return from the Port of Anzali and headed in that direction. Again the road was winding and full of potholes but we managed to reach our destination just in time to see the big, blue Caspian Sea, which seemed to merge with the sky. A few small boats and one or two ships were docked at the port. We rushed to ask the gatekeeper if the ship for Baku had left, and he replied that it would sail the next day. We were overjoyed at hearing this, and for me especially it was rewarding to know that I had made the deadline earlier than promised and accomplished that which I had set out to do.

RETURN TO TEHERAN AND SOME OTHER TRIPS

The passengers spent the night at their friends' homes and I slept in the car. Early morning they came to see me and paid their fares and also a good tip. On behalf of their hosts, they invited me to lunch, which still gave me time to see the sights. Anzali was much smaller than it appeared. A few stores carried mostly Russian goods such as matches, shoes, lump sugar, perfume and cloth from Europe. Fish, rice and vegetables were in abundance. Our hosts lavished us with all kinds of food. It should be known that Gilan cooking is very famous.

One of the persons present said that the ship from Baku had brought some passengers who wanted to go to Teheran but could not find transportation. Now that they had heard about my car, they were anxious to know if I could drive them there. I said, "With pleasure, but on the condition that we can spend some time in Resht and the fare will be 30 Tomans for the four of them".

As mentioned before, the port of Anzali, although small, was an important thoroughfare between Iran and Europe. Freight and passengers would arrive from or leave for Baku (in Russian Azarbayjan) and from there travel to other parts of the Soviet Union, Germany, France, England, etc.

Some sheds lined the waterfront and barbed wire was used to mark off the customs area. All sorts of goods were stacked either in sheds or in the yard. A small building acted as the passenger terminal and those who arrived by boat had the choice of going to Resht either by horseless carriage or by using a small railroad that had been built to facilitate trade between Iran and the rest of the world. This same railroad was later turned over to my future father-in-law, Mr. Bagheroff.

The four persons who would accompany me to Teheran were overjoyed that instead of going by carriage, they could travel by car. They even offered to pay 40 Tomans in place of the 30 Tomans asked by me, and so the next day we tied their suitcases to the running boards, stowed some bedding in the back and set off for Rasht.

My passengers told me to go directly to the home of one of their relatives, a certain Sardar Mansour, who was a notable of that city. Our host was most hospitable and offered me lodging and suggested that we visit the various sights and leave on the next day. We did just that and in appreciation, I drove him and his children through Rasht, where as elsewhere, people looked with amazement at this "horseless carriage".

I was able to find gasoline in a caravan-sarai (rest-stop), which acted as a depot for goods imported from Russia. I filled the gas tank and bought a few extra containers as the price was much cheaper than elsewhere!

The evening before our departure, a man appeared and in a pleading voice said, "I must get to Ghazvin as soon as possible and will pay any fare". I told him that the car was rented to these gentlemen and anyway there was no place inside for another person. He said, "I am willing to ride on the running board, if they will agree to let me come along!" They did and he sat on the extra gas tank all the way and paid me 10 Tomans for the trip.

A few more trips were made to Anzali port, always taking or bringing back passengers to or from Europe.

Because of people wanting to go on pilgrimages to holy shrines, Baghdad and Kerbella became the new destinations, but it would be some time before I made my first trip in that direction.

A man named Mohagheh Al Alama, who wanted to become a member of parliament from Shiraz, offered me 80 Tomans to drive him there. The road from Teheran to Qom and then to Isfahan was good compared to the road from Isfahan to Shiraz, which was terrible. Not only were there curves and bumps but crossing the water ditches nearly broke the car! To go over the ditches more easily, I decided to carry two long, large wooden planks to act as a bridge. This did the trick and I saved my car from falling apart.

The first night we slept in Dilijan, a small town in the middle of wheat, barley and oat fields. I could not understand what the people were saying because, like many parts of Iran, the dialect was quite different to what was spoken in Teheran. The second night we stayed at Mourcheh Khor, an historical town where Nader fought the Afghan armies. The third day we arrived in Isfahan, a famous city for its past history, artisans, shops, the big square with mosques and royal palaces. However, since my passenger was in a hurry to reach Shiraz, we did not stop for even a few minutes. The third night was spent in a small town called Abadeh, where the Ghashaghi tribes stopped on their way to the northern pasture lands. The famous ruler, Karim Khan Zand, was very fond of this area because it was mountainous and always had a cool breeze. The fourth day we entered Shiraz, the home of the most famous poets such as Saadi and Hafez.

My passenger was very kind and generous during our four day trip and showed his satisfaction by giving me a tip of 20 Tomans in addition to the fare. When he said good-bye, I felt sad, especially since I did

not know anyone in Shiraz. Just the same I decided to do some sight-seeing.

This world famous city was the capital of Iran many centuries ago and boasts many artisans, poets, warriors and architects. The glazed tile mosques, green parks, and well engineered, beautifully decorated buildings attract thousands of visitors each year.

Among the souvenirs to take home from Shiraz are fruits such as thin-skinned lemons, rose-water, and sweets of all kinds. A renowned handicraft is their method of making jewel and cigarette boxes, as well as picture frames, from finely cut ivory, teak and copper strips. These strips are cut like one cuts a salami or cucumber and glued in place. Star shaped pieces are placed one next to another and a mosaic sheet is produced. This is cut into different sizes and glued to the box or frame to produce beautiful objects called "Khatam Kari". I thought that these would be the best gifts to offer friends and family. Fortunately, when I was visiting the main bazaar I met the man whose name has become synonymous with this type of work, Mr. Sanie Khatam. I bought two boxes from him and he kindly gave me a good discount. During our conversation, he learned that I had a car and would be going back shortly. He said, "My son wants to go to Teheran. Can you take him as a passenger?" I replied, "With pleasure, but I have to find some other fares." He promised to help me and did so by introducing me to my other passengers.

Before leaving Shiraz, I realized that taking 80 Tomans with me was a big risk. For it is well known that highway robbers stop voyagers and take whatever they can! Someone told me that a branch of the "Shahi Bank" existed in Shiraz. I deposited the money and received a check to be cashed in Teheran. Now I started to worry about the check

being discovered. So, I folded it, put it in an envelope and hid it behind the reflector of the car's headlight.

Next day we started off for Teheran. It was about 5:00 PM and near Abadeh two armed men on horseback rode towards us. The passengers showed anxiety and fear for their lives. But I, still an inexperienced youth, became concerned about the check. Instead of trying to run away from them, I stopped the car, which in itself is a sign of submission. They came forward and asked, "Where are you coming from?" I replied, "Shiraz". Next question: "Who are these people?" Each person introduced himself. Next: "Whose car is it?" Reply, "Mine." The tougher looking one said, "By whose permission are you here?" I replied, "I didn't know that you needed permission!" While waving us to go on, he said, "Don't ever come around these parts!" We all gave a sigh of relief as one of the passengers told us that he recognized one of the riders as the famous highway man called "Akbar Khordel".

The second day we passed Isfahan, and on the third day we arrived in Teheran, safe and sound.

My wish was to go and visit faraway places, but for the time being I continued to taxi people between Teheran and Shimran.

One day, a friend suggested a trip to Kashan, a city to the south of Teheran. I accepted with joy for both my grandparents were born there and I always wanted to visit it. The road was much better than I anticipated. Upon arriving in Kashan, I saw an old friend named Abdolmisssagh Missaghieh and benefited from his knowledge and experience of the city.

Until that day, no car had entered that city. Therefore the residents of Kashan gathered around, touching, examining and asking questions about this horseless carriage. They stood in front of the car and no matter how much I blew the horn, they would not move out of the way. For they imagined that the sound of the car horn is a music particular to itself.

One day Mr. Missaghieh and some relatives invited me to lunch and for a tour of the town. Again, crowds gathered and blocked our passage. Blowing the horn did no good, so I bought a large camel bell and tied it to the front of the car. That did the trick. From then on, upon hearing the sound of the bell, people scattered to the side.

We visited the gardens of "Fin", which since have become very famous. Clear, cool water emerges from deep caverns, flowing into a multitude of water ways or small canals lined with blue glazed tiles. A majestic palace, which was once a summer residence used by the Ghajar kings and princes, is located at the top of this park. Much history and intrigue is associated with this place, for it served as a prison and there were even a few beheadings.

When we went back to the center of Kashan, I found out that this city, located on the edge of the great "Loot" desert, was very hot during the day and cool at night. It is known for its cooking utensils made of copper, velvet cloth, fine carpets, and gold weaving. Because it has many black widow spiders, in the summer months when people sleep in the open air under the star studded sky, they place the legs of their beds in shallow pools of water so that these dangerous creatures can't get to them.

A much feared bandit and his son, Mashallah Khan, had become the terror of these parts. Highway robbery went unchecked. A prime minister, Voshogh-O-Dowleh, put such a high ransom on their heads that finally they were caught, brought to Teheran and hanged in the main square of the capital. From then on the inhabitants of Kashan and its surroundings could sleep in peace.

My greatest pleasure during this period of my life was to ferry passengers by automobile throughout Iran. In this way I made good money and came to know every nook of my wonderful country. Wherever I went, people were kind and hospitable. They became adjusted to this new method of travel and I enjoyed their company. Getting to know the various ways of life, dialects, clothing, food and traditions was a great learning process. All was well! Thanks be to God. My only concern was, "What if I don't find the spare parts that I may need for the car?"

THE FIRST TRIP TO BAGHDAD

My first trip outside of Iran was to the west, to Iraq, whose capital is Baghdad. There I could find all types of spare parts and bring them back to Iran. However, one difficulty was getting through customs. For although the two countries had friendly relations, the inspectors would search every passenger from head to foot. They would look into every cavity of the car, open all the suitcases and levy heavy duties on all imported items (see photo#8). The reason for this was lack of revenue, and the income from customs made up for budget deficits.

On one trip, I bought a jersey dress for my sister, Tahereh. Upon opening my bag, the inspector saw it and said, "You'll have to pay a

pretty penny for this!" No matter how much I protested against the exorbitant duty, he would not give in and charged me what he wanted.

When friends and family learned that I was going back and forth to Baghdad, they all gave me lists of luxury items to buy for them. That city being at the crossroads of trade and commerce between Europe and the Orient, made it like the Paris, London or New York of the region. Ties, stockings, mechanical goods, high quality shirts, shoes, etc. were much in demand. The item on every woman's list was black silk cloth, which would be used for "Chadors". Some wanted face powder, lipstick and even high heeled shoes.

Visiting Baghdad is like going back into history. It was from here that the Medes, the Sasanians and other dynasties ruled Mesopotamia and the lands to the east and the west. I was fascinated by the ruins and the archaeological sites that I saw, always remembering that at Tarbiat School we had read about these vast empires. For centuries, this great metropolis was the seat of the Caliphates, the highest authority of the Islamic world.

When Europe was in the dark ages and nothing was known of the American continent, Baghdad had universities, magnificent buildings, well stocked bazaars, produced the finest poets and encouraged the arts. Students and seekers from all over the Middle East flocked to it, for it was the center of the universe. But alas, time and time again, wars led by Ghengis Khan, Tamour Lane and others destroyed that great civilization and plundered its riches.

One of the peculiarities of Baghdad is its coffee and tea houses. These are open-air cafes where food and beverages are served. People meet there to chat, play chess and checkers, but especially to conduct

their business affairs. Instead of discussing trade and commerce in their hot, stuffy offices, they come to the cafes to benefit from the fresh air, have a cup, socialize and conclude important deals. I visited one of these cafes, ordered a glass of tea, but not knowing Arabic and having no business to conduct, left a short time later.

While wandering through the streets of this city, my thoughts went back to the year 1863. For it was in that year that Baha'u'llah, the prophet of the Baha'i faith who was banished to Baghdad by Nasseredin Shah, revealed his mission of a spiritual reawakening and the beginning of a new world order to humanity. This historic event took place on the property of Najib Pasha and since has been known as the Garden of Rizvan.

MY FIRST TRIP TO SYRIA AND BEIRUT

Running a taxi service made me quite rich. For in two years, I amassed a few thousand Tomans and this capital brought ideas to my head. The first thought was to buy another car. In 1925, during one of the trips to Baghdad, I left my automobile there and went to Beirut, a port city that served as an important point for trade between the Middle East and Europe.

It was now seven years after the end of World War I. The Ottoman Empire had been broken up and parts of it divided between the French and the British as mandates. Much attention was being paid to Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, etc. The link between the Mediterranean ports and inner cities was through the desert. Because of sand storms, route markers or any semblance of a road would soon disappear and passage became hazardous, even dangerous. The only solution was to have a well experienced guide lead a caravan of cars,

buses, and trucks, one following another. Food and water for two days or more was prepared, several dozen passengers and drivers would operate the vehicles and the long trek would begin. Sometimes a caravan would get lost and by the time it was found, if ever, sad and shocking stories would be told about it.

As mentioned before, the British Army and the Foreign Office were well established in Iraq and Palestine. The French were mandates for Syria and Lebanon. The gold coins from England and France were much in demand, but the Ottoman gold lire was more popular.

The car that had won a good reputation for these desert crossings was named "Hudson". Several of these well built cars started together and after fifteen hours reached Damascus, but these fifteen hours were filled with anxiety and fear of getting lost. Once we reached our destination, prayers of thanks mingled with joy and laughter on all sides. I was very happy, for in a short time we would arrive in Beirut.

My first trip to Beirut, a beautiful and historic city spread between the Lebanese mountains and the Mediterranean sea, was very pleasant and memorable. I had heard much about its past, especially during the time of the Phoenicians, followed by the Romans, Islam, and finally the Ottoman Empire and now a free nation. Both Christianity and Islam contributed much to its cultural and educational institutions. An important port and center of trade, Beirut is a link between the Arab world and the west.

I visited the stores, the likes of which I had not seen before. Here, goods from all over the world were well stocked and especially

luxury items such as European furniture, elegant clothing, china, crystal vases, etc. Shopping around became a good past time and one of the first things I bought was a pair of black, shiny leather shoes for my sister. When she wore them in Teheran, she got so many compliments, that dozens of ladies asked me to get them a pair on my next trip.

After a few days of shopping and sightseeing, I went after that for which I had come to Beirut, to buy a car. Most of the European and American manufacturers had an agent in this city, which was considered the Paris of the Middle East. I already owned a Ford, had traveled in a Hudson, and had heard of Dodge. The question was: which of these three makes should I buy? Ford became the choice, because mine had given me complete satisfaction and the various trips that we had made together left me with a good impression. Experience is the best guide in one's life. A stanza from a famous poem says:

The wise have always wished to live twice:
Once to gain experience,
And the second, to use that experience.

I went to the Ford dealer. His name was Charles Gherm, a well dressed and very polite man and a writer of poems and several books. I told him about my past, the satisfactory performance of my Ford and my desire to buy another to take back to Iran and eventually many more for resale.

Charles, who was an important dealer of Fords, would import the parts, chaises, etc, and then assemble the cars in Beirut and sell them. They were always painted black and sold for about 320 - 340 Tomans, or 85 Ottoman pounds.

Charles agreed to take 80 pounds and delivered a new Ford (see photo #9), which I drove to the Holy Land, then called Palestine. I traveled through the Promised Land of the Jews, spent some time in Haifa to visit the Baha'i gardens on Mount Carmel and made a pilgrimage to the Shrines.

After a few days in Palestine, I drove the new Ford to Baghdad where I had left the first one. An Iraqi driver was hired. We got a few passengers and headed for Teheran.

I paraded the new shiny Ford through the streets of the capital and that attracted many potential customers. As the idea was to sell the car, a buyer showed up and paid me 600 Tomans, nearly twice the purchase price; and that for a car that took me from Beirut to Palestine to Baghdad to Teheran and had brought some fares that covered all the expenses.

This first transaction encouraged me to such a point that the next time, I bought 3 or 4 cars, sold them easily, and made a good profit. This type of business, transporting passengers to and from Iran, had become so attractive that others started doing it.

The matter of going on a pilgrimage to the Holy Shrines of Karbala, Najaf and Kazemein was very important to Muslims. For years even centuries, the route taken was through the Caspian port of Andali, Baku, across western Russia, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, Egypt or Syria or Palestine to Saudi Arabia and Mecca. Now, by bus or automobile, the trip via Baghdad, Damascus, Beirut, etc. was faster and safer. So dozens of transport companies were

formed, taxi services came into operation, and all sorts of vehicles were needed.

The Iranians too wanted to travel, go on buying trips and make pilgrimages. Sensing this demand, automobile dealers from Beirut seized the opportunity and established branches in Teheran. Michael and George Saad introduced the Hudson, Kattaneh Brothers opened the Dodge Dealership, later the Chrysler and Plymouth dealerships; Eysayoff and Amini obtained the Ford Agency, Levy Brothers got the Chevrolet dealership, as did others for White and International Trucks, etc.

Mr. Ali Vakili, president of the Teheran Chamber of Commerce, seeing that sugar and tobacco had become government monopolies, insisted and convinced the parliament to pass a law prohibiting private importation of cars, trucks, and spare parts. A "Central Company" whose shares were held by the government was established to import, sell and distribute vehicles and their parts. It was soon realized that these bureaucrats, who had no practical experience in the automobile industry, were not ordering the right type of spare parts or the quantities needed. This created havoc for the owners of cars as well as for the transport and bus companies.

The former importers did not sit idle and were constantly searching for ways to break up the monopoly. They contacted the manufacturers and convinced them to help change the situation by delaying shipments, sending more of this and less of that, etc., to prove that the monopoly is against the interest of all and was not businesslike.

The government faced so many complaints by owners and users of cars and trucks that it decided to dissolve the "Central Company" and let the foreign-run agencies be "reborn" on condition that they would take in Iranian partners or shareholders.

The first to accept this proposition and solution were the Katteneh Brothers (see photo #10), who took Mr. Hamedanian and myself as their Iranian partners. Others did the same. The situation improved greatly and all became satisfied for experienced people were running the show and not amateurs.

A TRIP TO EUROPE AND THOUGHTS ABOUT THE FUTURE

Considering the constant changes that were taking place, and having amassed some money from the sale of many Fords and the passenger service, I toyed with the idea of getting my own automobile dealership. For this I would have to gather much information and travel to where these vehicles were produced.

I left for France and arrived in Paris sometime later. This city of a thousand wonders, with its historical background, its cultural heritage, architectural beauty and scientific progress was for me, unimaginable. This country and all it had to offer was a magnet that drew Iranians to it and for us it was the symbol of the European continent. The people of France and their outlook on life, their system of education, laws, love of beauty, and literature is probably still the closest of the European countries to ours.

To learn the French language started way back during the Ghajar Dynasty. France was the country where most Iranians who could afford it, went for their higher education. French teachers and schools

appeared in many parts of our country. Laws and administrative systems were based on French practices.

While in Paris I gave up the idea of a car dealership and decided to buy two Berliet trucks, ship them to Beirut via Marseilles and drive them overland to Iran and establish a transport company. I did just that. Also, I thought that while in Europe, I would visit Italy to see its historical cities, learn more about its culture and industry.

After having sent the trucks to Beirut, I went to northern Italy where the famous Fiats were produced. There I bought a seven passenger touring car and drove it along the picturesque Mediterranean coast to Beirut. The two Berliets were cleared through customs in that port city and with goods and passengers, my little convoy traveled to Baghdad.

A CIRCUS FOR TEHERAN

In Baghdad I went to see a British circus and was so fascinated and entertained that the idea of taking it to Teheran entered my head. Why not let my countrymen enjoy such a spectacle in which people can do such wonders and are able to train animals to perform?

If you enjoy something you want to share it with others. At that moment you think of your friends and say to yourself, "I wish they were here!" I thought how nice it would be if the people of Iran or at least Teheran could see a circus and realize how far animal training has gone. A meeting with the circus manager was arranged. I told him that I had two trucks and a seven passenger car that could take them and their belongings to Teheran, where they could perform. For this, would he be willing to give me 20% of his ticket sales? Since going from one

place to another was his biggest problem, he agreed on the condition that I give him a few more days in Baghdad to finish off his contract. I readily accepted for Baghdad was a good place to spend time.

On the given date, we loaded the animals, tent and their baggage on the trucks. The manager and his staff rode in my car.

Once in Teheran, they were lodged at the Ferdows Hotel and I went about to find a place where the tent could be set up.

At the crossroads of Ferdows Avenue and the Third of Esfand Boulevard (named in honor of the day Reza Khan made the coup d'etat that established the Pahlavi Dynasty), an empty lot was available. However, it had been used as a rubbish heap. I cleaned it up, rented it and the circus tent was set up.

Since this was the first circus ever in Teheran, the demand was so great, that two performances a day were necessary. One was in the afternoon and one at night. Needless to say, the proceeds were overwhelming, and I was able to get a good share of that income in compensation for my efforts.

THE FIRST IRANIAN TRANSPORT COMPANY

After two successful months, the circus moved on to India. My two trucks and the seven passenger Fiat were now free. I decided to use them rather than sell them. The results were unbelievable.

For centuries, goods were transported by donkeys, horses and camels. Not only was it troublesome, but also time consuming and often unsafe. This new method, to move all sorts of merchandise by

truck, was very attractive and practical. At first, dozens of customers showed up, then later, hundreds. Passengers flocked in great numbers to travel between Teheran and other cities. A promising business and a turn in my life had begun.

But all was not rosy. I made a mistake in buying the French Berliets. Spare parts were not readily available and these trucks were not ideal for Iran. Furthermore, I needed a new base for my new venture.

A search was started and finally I found a place on Sepah Street, sometimes called Hassan Abbad Crossroad. It was a former Jewish cemetery. The owners were reluctant to erect houses, commercial buildings or even use it as a warehouse. However, they accepted my proposal and rented it as a garage for three Tomans a month. In those days that was a good sum, but low for such a space. I moved the two trucks and the car immediately and put up a sign "Sabet Transport Company". It was probably the first of its kind in Teheran and maybe all of Iran (see photo #11).

As mentioned before, the trucks were a complete failure. The only thing to do was to buy better trucks. The previously mentioned Kattaneh Brothers had opened an office in Teheran and represented the famous Dodge Company. They had plenty of parts and vehicles on hand. We negotiated two trucks and I fitted the trucks for hauling.

Needless to say an important part of one's life is how to plan for the future. How can one live better, serve humanity, and make every day better than the day before. Not only in obtaining material wealth, but in achieving spiritual and moral progress as well. This

inventiveness and problem solving will not only help the one person, but will also contribute to the advancement of society in general.

I wondered too, what could I do to improve my situation? One day my thoughts centered on the way the mail was transported in Iran. Reza Shah had come to power and wanted to modernize everything. Until now the post, money, letters-of-credit, etc. were carried by horse-drawn carriages, mules or camels. Maybe the government would permit me to fulfill this function by using my vehicles.

My uncle, Rahim Arjomand, was the Assistant Director of the Post, Telephone and Telegraph. This idea was discussed with him but because of his conservative nature and fear of accepting such a responsibility, he refused my offer. I insisted, giving many good reasons for its success and finally convinced him to discuss the matter with his superior, the minister himself. To strengthen the argument, I proposed to carry the mail on my trucks from Teheran to Mazandaran (a northeastern province, near the Caspian Sea). This was in line with the wishes of Reza Shah who was anxious to establish a link between the capital and the towns of northern Iran.

The minister who was very positive in his thinking discussed the matter with the Shah, who in turn gave his approval. Shortly thereafter, a contract was signed giving Sabet Transport the concession to carry the mail twice a week from Teheran to Babol in lieu of 80 Tomans a month. This postal service became so renowned that soon the government expanded the network to cover the cities of southern and western Iran and even Baghdad. I became so encouraged by this new venture that I had stationary printed with the letterhead:

Sabet Transport Company

Governmental Postal Service
Reza Shah's Mazanderan Route

(see photo #12)

Both passenger and goods transportation were on the increase and this necessitated expanding the fleet. Although passenger cars were added from time to time, it was really the shortage of trucks that caused problems. So I decided to go directly to the Dodge Importer in Beirut and buy several trucks at a time, load them with goods in Beirut and drive them to Iran. This operation meant that I bought the trucks at a much lower price and made some money in transporting goods to Teheran. The drivers were mostly Lebanese or Syrians who were qualified and courteous.

It was in the late 1920's that Reza Shah decided to build the trans-Iranian railroad. Until that date there were only a few miles of tracks, some here, some there. The only long mileage of track was the one built by the Russians between Jolfa (Caspian port) and Tabriz.

SOUVENIRS FROM THE RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION DAYS

In 1927 the Trans-Iranian Railroad construction was started. The ground breaking ceremonies were in the presence of Reza Shah and many dignitaries who had come from Teheran. By coincidence, the route of the to-be constructed railroad was exactly the same as that which had been awarded to Sabet Transportation to carry the mail, i.e. Khorramshar (port on the Persian Gulf) to Mazandaran on the Caspian Sea. The important task of building the railroad was given to a Danish Company called Kampsax, whose directors were Mr. Kampmann and

Mr. Saxhill, thus the name of the company. The organization was first class, with much experience, capability and fairness towards the Iranian employees, thus fulfilling the wishes of Reza Shah. Good wages were paid and thousands of workers, engineers and staff were trained in modern methods of construction and administration. The idea of the Shah was that there would be a transfer of technology while establishing good human relations.

On the inauguration of the northern section of the line, Reza Shah asked an Iranian engineer some technical questions. Hearing answers that did not satisfy him and seemed ambiguous, he reprimanded the engineer saying, "In the future, pay more attention to your work and study the details and inform yourself of what you are doing." As the leader of modern Iran, he was very keen to obtain the best results and encouraged his countrymen to assume their responsibilities. He personally visited various sites and applauded the way mountain passages were opened, tunnels built and bridges of unbelievable length were constructed. Wherever Reza Shah went, he would prove his unending endurance, brightness of mind and genuine desire to transform ancient Persia into modern Iran. His questions at various work sites amazed the people around him and even the foreign technicians.

A key figure in this project that took many years was a man named Garing, who assumed the financial and administrative responsibilities of Kampsax. He stayed in Iran from 1927 until 1977 and in those 50 years served Iran as well as his native country of Denmark.

In order to keep the construction of this national railroad going at full speed, the logistics and supply pipeline of machinery and

equipment, especially the supply of rails and ties was very important. Kampsax, after much investigation, decided to award the haulage of the necessary materials, including rails, cement, dynamite, etc. to Sabet Transportation Company. We tried our best to satisfy their deadlines and keep the work on schedule. Unfortunately though, while the southern and northern sections were both almost complete, the middle part had run into a major problem.

Some of the requirements came by ship through the port of Khorramshaar in the south, but the rails came through Russia in the north. Unfortunately, a dispute between Iran and the USSR prevented the northern shipments. Mr. Saxhill who was in overall charge of the project called me into his office. First, he thanked me for the cooperation between myself and his assistants. He stated how pleased he was with our services and then he said, "The rail beds are ready, the ties are in place, but we have no rails from the north to complete the job. Can your trucks haul some rails from the south to the middle section?"

I replied that it all depended on the length of the rails. He said, "About twelve meters". I quickly answered "Yes!" He was overjoyed, and said that he would immediately give the good news to Reza Shah. He added that, "Whatever the cost, it will be paid. The important thing is to accomplish the task and to please his majesty, for that, Kampsax will be grateful to you."

I set out to find the best solution, for the distance between Doroud and Arak (the west-central part of Iran) was great. The road was narrow, winding and had many up and down steep grades. The Ministry of Roads had done a good job in improving the conditions, but still to haul long rails would not be easy.

Consultation is the basis for finding solutions and a few heads are better than one. So, I contacted my old friend Mehdi Batmanghelich, a self-made man with much courage and initiative. He owned a fleet of heavy-duty trucks and was quite active and knowledgeable. The matter was studied in depth. When all alternatives were considered, his solution was to hang the 12 meter rails in front of and behind the driver's cab.

With this solution in hand, I contacted Mr. Saxhill again to reassure him of the rail delivery. Mr. Saxhill in turn informed Reza Shah that the obstacle had been removed and that work would continue without interruption.

A contract was signed and I gathered other truck owners for we needed many vehicles. Through cooperation by all, the rails were transported, and the northern section of the Trans-Iranian Railroad joined the southern section at Arak.

Saxhill and I became the best of friends, for he appreciated what I did to facilitate his work and in turn, I got a helping hand at the beginning of my business career. Whenever I visited Copenhagen, I would go to see him and he reciprocated by his hospitality.

Needless to say, because of this important undertaking, the number of trucks increased constantly and soon we had more than 20 vehicles in "Sabet Transportation Company". Other truck owners joined the fleet and soon about 40 vehicles were hauling rails and other necessities.

What I learned from all this was that even when confronted by difficulties and tests, we as human beings, having been given by the Almighty an intellect and a soul, should never be discouraged or downhearted. On the contrary, we should, through perseverance and patience strive to achieve our goals, knowing that if our aim is to carry forward an ever advancing civilization, God will be helping us.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A WOOD WORKING FACTORY

As mentioned before, when I was 15 years old our family lived in a small house off Amirieh Avenue. In the spring, trees were green and there was an abundance of water. During the summer months residents of Teheran would come to that area to stroll and meet their friends. Later, the name of that Boulevard was changed to "Reza Shah Avenue".

Our home had been bought by my father for 75 Tomans (about \$10 at the rate of exchange at that time). He had made a down payment and paid the rest of it with monthly installments. It consisted of one large room in the center, surrounded by two smaller rooms, the kitchen, another room and a water reservoir, which was in the cellar. There was a modest court yard with a round shallow pool in the center. There was no furniture, so we sat on a rug in the so called "Living Room".

From time to time, I would invite my school friends to our dwelling, either to study together or just chat and pass the free hours. Since there were no chairs or tables inside, we sat on the edge of the pool or simply on the ground, upon a mat.

My mother, who was in the kitchen either cooking or doing something, was uneasy when we trooped in. She was concerned because there was no door to separate the inside from the outside. She would say that she was embarrassed when my friends saw her in this situation and maybe it would be better if they didn't come. I assured her that I would take care of the matter by building a door for the kitchen. She smiled with contentment but wondered how I could fulfill my promise, not having the tools or wood or experience.

But I was determined, so I set out to build the door. In time, I became convinced that to take a decision is the first step towards accomplishment. You have to decide on something, then through faith, perseverance, hard work and a sense of responsibility, achieve it. Of course, one has to think out all the aspects, the pros and cons, and then take action.

Regarding the matter of decision taking, which has played an important role in my accomplishments, I am reminded of the great conqueror and warrior Tamarlane. This historic figure wrote in his native tongue of Turkish about one of his defeats and his hiding in some ruins to save his life. There he sees an ant trying to carry a heavy grain up the mud wall and into his nest. As the weight of the grain was too much for the ant, each time he was halfway up, he would tumble down. Determined, he would not be discouraged and would pick up the grain and try once more. Again the ant would fall. Tamerlane, although in a desperate situation, concentrated all his attention on the doings of this ant. He saw that after many attempts, this small creature finally dragged the grain into his nest.

At this point, Tamarlane gets up and says to himself, "Are you less than this ant? Gather your forces, renew your energy put defeat

behind you and move on to more conquests!" And so he did, winning one victory after another.

Maybe the idea to build a simple door is nothing compared to the above story, but the decision to do so with no carpentry experience and no tools - and to succeed, was a first step and an encouragement to establishing the first mechanized, modern wood working factory in Iran.

As told before, our neighborhood had three stores. One store sold cheese, butter, yogurt, tobacco, dried peas, etc. Another carried pots and pans, dishes, kettles and so on. The third sold wood, floor matting made of bamboo, ladles, wooden spoons, forks, logs, etc.

From the third store, I bought a small wooden rod, which I would use as the handle for the kitchen door that I was to build. But as for the planks that would constitute the door itself, I had an idea. Before divulging that, let me explain a few things.

My father sold cloth in the bazaar. He bought English fabric from importers and sold it retail in his small store, located near Shahpour Street. Next to his store, there were many others dealing in all sorts of wares. One of the shops belonged to the Elghanian family. One of the sons became very prosperous. His first name was Habib and he started several businesses, one of which was plastic injection. Unfortunately he was executed during the Islamic revolution, but let me go back to the story about the wooden door.

The yards of cloth that my father sold in his store were wrapped around a flat wooden plank measuring 60 - 70 cm long by 20 - 25 cm wide. It was these boards that I had in mind.

I should mention that often after school, I would go to my father's store, especially on Fridays and holidays when the stores were open. One day, I asked if he would take me along and visit the various bazaars selling shoes, cloth, etc. He agreed, for by going with him I would learn new things and help him out as well.

He told me that this "Sabze-Maidan" (Green Square) was established during the reign of Nasser-I-Din Shah. At first it had a huge pool in the center where people would wade and wash themselves, despite the filth and bacteria-laden water. Some would wash in preparation for prayers, workers would wash their feet and hands, others would bathe their children or wash diapers, etc. Fortunately the municipality filled it up with earth and that put an end to its spreading disease and the unsightly practices.

On this very site bazaars were built, each section being rented to various guilds - shoemakers, leather goods, clothes sellers, etc. Then he told me the history of various political intrigues that led to beheadings, murders and jealousies in the court of Nasser-I-Din Shah. Among the executions were two innocent Baha'is, Vargha and his son Rouhollah.

By this time we had reached the cloth selling area and my father bought 4 - 5 rolls of cloth, putting some under his arms and others over his shoulders. Then we went back to his shop in Shahpour Street.

Sadness overcame me at the sight of my father burdening himself with the weight of all that cloth, simply to provide us with a decent living. I asked if I could carry some of the rolls and he said you are too small for that. I insisted and he agreed to let me carry one roll.

Seeing that I was becoming tired, he took it back and eventually we reached our destination. There I said, "Please don't sell the planks, for I need them to build a door for the kitchen." His total surprise was no less than that of my mother's. He agreed and I stayed to learn more.

MY FIRST LESSON IN ECONOMICS

I have to say that my first lessons in economics were learned in my father's shop. There, I observed how one buys and sells, the art of bargaining, and how my father's calm made him a winner. I enjoyed it!

It was in this school that I learned how to save and appreciate the value of every little thing. Once, I asked, "Why did you bargain so much over a few pennies?" He replied, "Profits come from buying at a lower price, and not always from selling high." An old proverb says, "Get your money's worth".

Some customers would bargain a great deal. But my father, in good humor and with stories, would say to them, "So what if I make a few pennies, you on the other hand will wear your suit for many years and in good health!"

He would put up with their whims and demands because he knew that our family's livelihood depended on them. He would offer the best materials at honest prices in order to gain the confidence of his customers, even if they didn't buy a thing. He had not attended school, but had gained his experience and wisdom by associating and working with people, which is in itself worth a great deal.

He had heard the saying "Learn from the mouths of people". This is one of the best ways to obtain wisdom, become educated and learn the good ways of life.

Although he had no schooling, he was good with figures and could make notes in a small booklet about his business. He was honest, polite and generous. Whatever he said or did was acceptable by most because they knew he was sincere.

I hope I did not bore you by speaking about my father. I think it is only just to mention the good characteristics of a person and appreciate their qualities.

One important point is clear; he was economical. He used to say, "Waste is ungodly. A person has to rely on himself and spend in accordance with his means, not his whims and fancies!"

In the back of his shop there was a small space where he would eat his lunch. A meal very modest and inexpensive, consisting of bread and cheese, and sometimes grapes or melon or halvah. As previously said, I enjoyed a similar menu in school.

After lunch he would take a nap for about half an hour and be ready for his afternoon's work. On many occasions, I would join him for that simple meal. But let me say that those simple luncheons were so pleasant and unforgettable that no matter where and how well I eat now, those days will always be remembered.

CARPENTRY AT HOME

To build a door for our kitchen I needed more than a few boards. I took the few pennies I had saved from my piggy bank and bought a small drill, a hammer, pliers, a saw, a file, and finally a few nails.

I set to work, first cutting the door handle to size, then making a frame and finally nailing the boards to the cross planks. When it was finished, trimmed and sanded, I attached the door to the frame and our kitchen finally had a door.

My mother was very pleased but remarked that the door made the room too dark. I obliged and removed a plank so light could come in.

Having achieved this, I decided to build a bed for myself. Seeing her son's capabilities, my mother asked if I could build a bigger table than the one we had.

The bed was easy to make, for I used white pine wood. While sawing it, I cut my left thumb. My mother quickly used a brownish liquid that was called potassium of permanganate and a piece of white cloth to bandage it. I returned to work and soon saw that the liquid had come through the cloth and stained the wood. The color was nice, so I went to my mother and said, "Don't throw away the mixture, for I am going to use it to stain my wooden bed." The final hue was a dark violet or the color of eggplant. The result was attractive and even now, I can picture it.

The outcome of all this was that I discovered a new interest and that was woodworking, or carpentry. I became so involved and drawn to this type of work, that in 1932, when I was 29 years old, I established the first woodworking plant in Iran using motor driven machines. The

site was "Baghe Shah" and the name was "Sabet's Woodworking Factory".

As I mentioned before, previous to this I had already founded a company transporting goods and passengers and a contract to carry the government mail.

But to manage a factory using modern technology and the latest methods of producing wooden doors, windows and furniture was something else. It required ingenuity and perseverance, and that is exactly what I wanted. Even as a small child, I desired to be inventive and not merely copy others.

THE FIRST KEY TO SUCCESS

In order to succeed in your chosen profession, you must love it, show the utmost interest and be willing to make sacrifices. These conditions must be maintained for a long time. If not, after awhile your enthusiasm will cool down and soon disappointment and even regret will bring about material and moral losses.

An old saying goes like this, "No one will adopt a child, unless the child is wearing a golden chain around his neck!" Meaning that one will never treat another's child like one's own. To select someone else's occupation can never be like the one you have picked out for yourself. For the same way that you show love, patience, and understanding for your offspring, so you must for your work, if you want to be successful.

How often do we see, especially among young people, that having started something and not achieving their goals in a short period, they

abandon it and go on to look for something else and then something else, and so on, blaming their failures on chance and misfortune.

Wanting to be successful and carefully planning for it will require decisions that are firm and binding, thus assuring achievement. It goes without saying that all professions and endeavors are worth pursuing, especially if they can be rewarding; otherwise they would not exist. No one will go after something which is worthless! For selection and success depends on one's love and capabilities for that work; then patience and perseverance are needed and finally accumulation of experience. A combination of all this, plus a belief that only by doing good can one surge ahead and achieve the desired goals makes victory inevitable.

Hoping not to have tired you, let me say that the reason why I was able to set up the large woodworking factory, and other "first" enterprises in Iran, is because the practices and principles mentioned above.

If carpentry attracted me, it started with a simple desire to build a door for my mother, a person whom I loved and who had sacrificed so much for my sister and myself. This willingness to do something positive laid the foundation for my future activities.

Because of this keen interest in carpentry, I spent hours learning about the various tools of the trade, such as saws, hammers, drills, planners, etc. Much time was used to visit saw mills, wood-working shops and stores that sold furniture, just to see what were the details and peculiarities of this business that I wanted to enter.

I noticed that there was a lot of labor involved. Heavy tree trunks had to be sawed into planks, usually by two workers exerting so much energy that perspiration would cover their face and arms. Then the planks would be cut to certain lengths, planned and glued to one another, then shaped and nailed together.

The work places were often small, and in the cold months filled with smoke generated by burning the waste wood in small tin barrels. Saw dust was always in the air and covered everything. Because everything was done manually, the work hours were long and tiring. Although at that time I was only 28 years old and inexperienced, I thought to myself, "Surely there must be an easier way to cut wood, produce doors and windows and make furniture?" I was told that in the city of Leipzig, in Germany, there is an annual fair, where among other things, there was a wood-working machinery exposition, and that should I decide to go, I would see a lot and learn a great deal.

The idea fascinated me, for I thought maybe finally we could put an end to all that hand work, the sweating, the long hours and low quality products.

The small carpentry shop owners had neither the means nor the vision to get involved in such a "mechanization" project. The Government of Reza Shah had more important things to do such as finishing the railroad, establishing law and order, upgrading the administration, etc. It was too soon to expect it to pay attention to the development of commerce and industry. I too didn't have enough cash for such a venture. So, what was to be done?

Finally, my love for this work, the idea of helping my country to modernize and wishing to improve the lot of carpenters led me to take the decision and go to Germany.

Therefore, via Russia, which was the most frequented route to Europe in those days, I headed for Berlin, the capitol of Germany and the second most important city of that continent. On my way west, the vast farmlands and rivers that led to the Baltic and the industries created after the ruinous First World War fascinated and absorbed my attentions. I had read and heard much about the Prussians with leaders such as Bismarck, Wilhelm, and Hindenburg. My readings included the defeat of the Germans in a humiliating war, which was started by themselves and which had brought turmoil and fire to so many nations. I became sad and disturbed.

The stopover in Berlin was short, for my plans were to reach Leipzig and the fair as soon as possible. Upon arrival, I headed for the section where wood working machines were on display. I was overjoyed at seeing all those electrical saws, sanders, automatic drills, planers, etc., assembled together, under one roof. Why, I asked myself, hadn't someone from our country ever imported several or at least one of these wonderful machines which have been in use for so many years, simply to facilitate things and save time and energy? Hours were spent in examining each machine, comparing one with another, asking questions upon questions and not being ashamed to do so. What is wrong with admitting that one doesn't know something? A big fault is to be ignorant of a matter yet pretend knowledge of that!

How many dictators, kings and rulers has this world seen, who through their stubbornness and blind prejudices have brought misery, destruction and death to countless of millions of peoples? Their

egotism prevented them from listening to well-wishing advisors and divinely inspired counselors. How happy is the man who has learned the meaning of knowledge. Woe to him who is ignorant and doesn't want to find the truth!

THE DECISION TO ESTABLISH A WOODWORKING FACTORY

Vis-à-vis those impressive machines, the exposition and what it represented, I felt completely awestricken. Without the least shame, I approached the sellers, technicians and finally the directors of the companies present and told them of my plan to set up the first modern, machine-run factory in Iran. With the utmost courtesy and patience, they listened and promised their help.

A company by the name of "Adolf Aldinger" of Stuttgart, had the largest stand and appeared to be the best. After meeting one of the managers, it was agreed that his company would prepare a detailed list of machines and spare parts, with a layout and installation instructions. This was done while I was still in Germany and based on that offer, the order was placed and foreseen that in a few months all would be shipped to Teheran.

Now, I would have to rush back to Iran so as to find and buy the land needed for the factory as well as draw up the plans for the building, purchase the necessary electric generators, etc.

I had a good friend named Fath-O-Lah Moshir Obehey. He was a few years older and had much experience in industrial matters, construction details and best of all promised to help me in every possible way with this project.

SELECTION AND PURCHASE OF THE FACTORY SITE

There were at that time large tracts of land in an area West of Teheran called Bagh-E-Shah. To me, they seemed too far out for customers to travel such a distance.

One day, a person named Sadr, riding a motorcycle, came to my office and garage on Sepah Avenue and said, "The Honorable Farmanfarmain invites you to visit him tomorrow at noon time". Surprised, I accepted. Surprised, because I thought this person might be mistaken, for what would Mr. Farmanfarmain want of me? Maybe he wants to go on a trip himself or wants me to drive someone or he needs to transport something?

Any way, the next day I went to his home located on Sepah Avenue near Kakh Street and the same person, who brought the message, greeted me at the door and led me to an outer garden and hence, to a building which was used for ceremonies and receptions. There, for the first time I would meet Abdul-Hussein Mirza Farmanfarmain, an old man, a former Prince of the late Ghajar dynasty, and a person who was much respected by Reza Shah. He was the father of Nossrat-Dowleh Firooz, one of the famous ministers of Reza Shah, and owner of land equivalent to the territories of Holland or Belgium. He was the one who gave his long green cane and his private house, the marble palace to Reza Shah, who was the officer that made a coup d'etat and established a new dynasty called "Pahlavi".

The best water in Teheran came from a spring located in the north of the city, on the property of this same Farmanfarmain, and with his permission used by the inhabitants of the capitol.

Once in his presence, we bowed. It was this same person who ruled many of the tribes and cities of Persia in former times. Now, with the utmost courtesy and warmth, he bade me to have a seat and ordered tea. Then he said, "It is lunch time. Let us go and eat". With humility and certain hesitation, I accepted. He extended his left hand so that I could take his arm and help him to the adjoining room, which was foreseen for lunches. We sat at a round table. He asked Mr. Sadr, his major domo, to sit as well. This was 58 years ago or 1931. The servant first brought the soup. Then, a large round plate of white rice and a deep dish of stew (khoresht ghormeh sabzi). His hospitality, manners and courtesy impressed me a great deal. He ordered the servant to serve me first.

Then with simple but sincere words, he said, "I understand that you want to establish a woodworking factory. Will you install an electric generator?" I replied, "It's true, we'll have electricity, because the factory will need it". He asked, "Where do you want to install it?" I said, "The place is to be determined". He instructed Mr. Sadr to accompany me and show me all the land in and around Teheran.

While thanking him, I said, "We have to make a careful selection so as to find a suitable yet inexpensive property". He then stated, "My aim is not to sell land, but to give a young person such as yourself, who wants to create something new and important, a good helping hand. Go and find the land needed, mark off as much as you need, determine the fair price and pay in as many installments as you can. Then come back to see me, especially at noon time so we can have lunch together."

Whatever he said was sincere and full of kindness and generosity. He had a far reaching vision, an impressive personality and a strong character. Maybe it was because of his trials and tribulations, the passage of time and his vast experience that are worth more than material wealth. If a mother's love did not exist, or was not passed to her child, our world would be another world. How wonderful it is when one, before going to sleep, can ask himself, "Did I do something today to bring joy and comfort to someone? Did I give somebody a helping hand?"

With Mr. Sadr, we visited many plots of land and finally with the help of Mr. Moshir Obehi, selected one that was located at the Western gate of Teheran called Bagheh Shah (The King's Garden).

A few days later I went to see Mr. Farmanfarmain. He kept me for lunch and after, he told me that I could buy as much as I wanted. I replied, "As my budget is limited, I'll take 6,000 Square meters at 10 Rials a square meter. And as I have no cash available, I'll pay for it when the factory starts working". He said, "First, 9 Rials is enough and second, pay whenever you can".

I'll never forget his generosity or that day. On many occasions, I have told his children that my factory would not have had a good beginning had it not been for their father. In appreciation, I am always at their service.

The factory started its work and whenever possible I paid a sum of 20 or even 100 Rials. It was never asked of me, "When will you make a payment"?

The machinery and accessories arrived from Germany. The factory building, well designed and constructed by engineer Fathollah Moshir Obahi, was finished and very attractive (photo 13). The roof had timber beams covered with tin sheets. In due time the doors and window were made on site. It took about two years to complete the job, the delay being due to shortage of cash. I had no funds myself, therefore, we had to depend on money that was gradually generated from my other business, The Sabet Transport Company.

In those days, there was no industrial development bank or any other bank to get a loan. People who had a little or great amount of money wouldn't even consider loaning to a factory. The only person that I knew to whom one could turn and get a private loan was Kazem Pour. He was from the Northern part of Iran, bordering on the Russian frontier and therefore his original name was "Kazemoff". Because the word "off" was a Russian title meaning "son of"; the regime of Reza Shah was against such names and therefore, he dropped the "off" and simply became Kazem Pour-Amri, and that, because the family was known for their belief in the Baha'i faith and service to humanity.

Kazem Pour had a big store and was in building supplies and iron beam sales. His eldest son's name was Abbas, and it was he who gave me a loan of 100 Tomans and upon repayment, would renew it again.

Such people who are always willing to give others a helping hand, are well appreciated and their open-mindedness and sense of generosity gave me the chance to finish the plant.

The factory was soon ready and to supervise the operations, I hired two competent foremen. The first was an Iranian named Ellias. He had studied in France and had a good knowledge of furniture making.

The second was a German named Ochter, who was an expert in the workings of carpentry machines. Carpenters were invited to visit the factory and give us their rough lumber to be cut or planned, or prepared for finishing in their own shops. Some took advantage of this offer while others who feared that our success would give us a competitive edge, refused to benefit from this labor-saving and speedy way of doing their work.

We needed work, and much of it, in order to utilize and amortize the expensive machinery and overhead. Unfortunately, some carpenters spread rumors that wood cut with a fast saw would heat and dry up too quickly. To our regret, many believed them and although we had some customers, the number was not enough to pay for the wood, labor and other expenses (photo 14).

The idea to produce tables and chairs in large quantities and advertise their prices and sell direct to consumers, helped a great deal but we were always short of cash.

In those days, the only other factory in Iran was the sugar plant of "Kahrizak". This was controlled by the Ministry of Arts and Crafts under a Secretary of State named "Motazem-Saltaneh Farokh" (photo 15). By orders of Reza Shah, The Great, it was his duty to keep this factory going despite many problems. Sugar in those days was not in powder or cubes but in the form of a loaf or cone. In order to dry the loaves as they came out of the molds, it was necessary to place them in wooden racks, which were needed by the hundreds. These shelves or racks, which had to be uniform and sturdy were beyond the possibilities of traditional carpenters who refused to build them anyway.

The Ministry, which had a limited budget and a stingy Director, accepted our offer to produce these racks. The main condition was that they be delivered complete, installed and accepted by the inspectors. We fulfilled our part of the contract but the Ministry didn't pay. We waited for awhile, but still they didn't pay. We had done our best but now we were in a financial pinch. The workers who had not been paid for sometime quit their jobs. The lumber sellers came to the factory many times to collect their money. The situation became desperate. I decided to go and see the Minister Mr. Farokh. His secretary would not let me in his office. I said, "I'll stay here until he comes out, I won't move unless I am paid. I'll even sleep here!"

Finally, Mr. Minister allowed me in. I didn't know if I could sit down. So, standing, I asked him very politely to issue the payment order, explaining in the meanwhile the deplorable situation at the factory. Contrary to my expectations, without the slightest regret or understanding, he ordered me out of the room. He said, "Whenever we have money, we'll pay you". I said, "If you didn't have the funds, why did you order?" He replied, "Don't be insolent" and with that he ordered his secretary to kick me out. But before leaving, I said, "Maybe the reason you don't pay me is because I am an honest person, and haven't tried to bribe anyone". Mr. Farokh became very angry and insulted and said he would have the police arrest me.

Next morning, an officer from the Central Police Department, which was headed by Colonel Mohamed Hossein Ayrom, came to arrest me, in return for the work I had done and service rendered in making those shelves. I was in jail for two months.

After that period, my father-in-law, Sayyed Ahmed Khamsi, through his good friend the Minister of Justice, Mr. Ali Akbar Davar, who had reorganized the Department of Justice and the Courts, interceded and I was called into the office of Colonel Ayrom. All of this, only after the matter had been brought to the attention of Reza Shah himself.

The Colonel ordered some tea and sweets and started to appease me, saying that in reality he had nothing to do with the reason for my arrest. It was orders.

After sometime, the Department of Arts and Crafts paid 3,000 Tomans, but I'll never forget that incident.

BETTER DAYS FOR THE FACTORY

Because it was my aim to be successful and contribute to the industrialization of the country, I accepted all challenges despite the shortage of cash, lack of customers at times, the daily problems of running the plant or any unforeseen events. Due to this perseverance, the factory attracted many customers and forged ahead, developing a good reputation.

It was at this time that I decided, with the help of Manuchehr Khorsand, who had just returned from France with a degree in Architecture, to build a house on land just North of the factory. (Photo 16) Needless to say all the doors, windows and even the furniture for this house was produced at the plant and for the first time, innovative design, color and shape was utilized. So much that many people came to visit and see the latest in carpentry progress, especially the cherry colored doors and windows.

One afternoon, the factory guard came running, very excited, to announce that Reza Shah, The Great, was about to enter the aforementioned house. One could easily understand his astonishment, for wherever Reza Shah went, even when Ministers or Army officers were in his presence ready to obey instructions or try to reply to his questions, an atmosphere of tenseness and excitement developed. I, accompanied by the very capable and experienced plant foreman, Gholam Reza, rushed to greet Reza Shah. He had walked from nearby Baghe-Shah, which had become his main headquarters after the famous Coup D'Etat that had brought him to power. He came alone and very much at ease for a "visit".

With the utmost attention to details, which was his main character, he looked closely at the doors and windows. As soon as we entered, we bowed and stood behind him. Soon he turned to us and spoke in a kind and encouraging tone, saying, "If I pay, will you also build me such fine quality objects?" We replied, "Your majesty, we will build better, even without payment!" He asked, "Where is the factory?" The reply was, "Nearby, just below this building".

Without hesitation, he started to walk towards the factory. To me, he seemed very pleased with this visit and showed an appreciation for what had been accomplished.

At the end of his visit, he asked for a carriage. We hailed one and with the utmost joy and thankfulness bade him good-bye. It seems to me that this visit on his part was to eradicate the bad memories of the Arts and Crafts and Police incident.

Two days later in the morning, General Karim Agakhan Bouzar Jomehri, the Mayor of Teheran, with his Buick, without forewarning, came to the

factory and said, "His Majesty has instructed us to buy all the furniture and doors and windows for the Municipality and the Shah's Palaces from you. We will give you all the wood and timber needed. I thanked him but informed him that we didn't have all that money or the place to store it.

Contrary to all the rumors about his lack of knowledge or capability to run the city of Teheran, he proved to be honest, dynamic and kind. I don't think the Capitol ever had a better manager.

In answer to my concerns, he said, "Close to your factory there are many empty lots that belong to the municipality. Go chose what you need and we'll transfer the deed, and the payment for that land will be offset by the work delivered to us. The money for the lumber will be taken care of later. Don't worry about it."

It is true that what he said and did was with the complete backing of Reza Shah, but one must remember that he was one of the important officers who participated in the Coup D'Etat and moved up in rank only after proving his capabilities. He looked after the royal household and was Chief of Staff till the last days of the Shah.

As Mayor of Teheran, he completely changed the face and character of the Capitol. Four main boulevards were built over the moats surrounding the city. A North-South road was established that was lined with maple trees, later named Pahlavi Avenue.

In those days, the water of Teheran was provided by a canal that had it's source from the near-by town of Karaj. The supply entered the city from the North and flowed South through many avenues and streets, but the most attractive were the waterfalls of Pahlavi Boulevard.

Mayor Bouzarjomehri was responsible for many of the main squares of Teheran such as Sepah, Ferdowsi, etc., as well as two of the important city parks with fountains, trees, flowers and so on. Even the City Administration became modern and well run with uniforms for Civil Servants and separate Departments for the various Municipal affairs.

Yes, with the visit of the Mayor and the orders he placed, the factory started to become active again and hope was restored. I bought 700 meters at 3 Tomans a square meter, and the next day several army trucks brought us so much lumber that all the land was covered. A short while later, orders for furniture for the Municipal restaurant, the cafes, the Shah's private residences, and the Caspian Villas came pouring in. Money was coming in, we found ourselves very busy and out of remorse.

A few days later, Mr. Shokoo-Ol Molk, the private Secretary of the Shah, sent a messenger to announce that tomorrow afternoon, her Royal Highness, Queen Pahlavi, will visit the factory and wants to see those special doors and windows. We were delighted and anxiously awaited her arrival.

Next day, Queen Pahlavi, with Her Lady in Waiting, Mrs. Arfah, the wife of one of the well known and distinguished Princes, appeared at the entrance. Without exaggeration and aside from all political considerations, it must be admitted that she was worthy of the title "Queen of Iran". A lady in every sense, she showered her grace upon all and the workers, employees and myself were overjoyed. She keenly observed all the production operations and asked detailed questions, and finally ordered some chairs, tables, closets, commodes and so on.

All were meticulously produced and controlled by the foremen and managers and delivered to the Marble Palace. Along with her appreciation, she paid us well and I am sure that that furniture, produced with such pride in Sabet's factory was well used even after the palace became the "Reza Shah Museum".

From then on, order after order came in and exceeded our capacity so much so that we worked overtime. Even so, deliveries were delayed and quite often we had to apologize or invent excuses to calm our customers.

Mr. Haj Gholam Reza Amin, who passed away many years ago and was a kind and generous man, famous for his character and uprightness, invited us several times to his home, and was very hospitable. One day, this gentleman came to visit the factory and saw four chairs built according to a French model. He liked them, learned that the price was 4 Tomans and ordered two. Foreman Gholam Reza, whose name I've mentioned before and whose daughter became the famous singer of radio and television "Elaheh", promised that the two chairs would be ready in two or three weeks. This surprised my good friend and myself for we thought they would be ready much sooner, but didn't say anything. Unfortunately two, three, even six weeks went by and the chairs were not ready. All sorts of excuses were given, such as the wood is not yet dry, the worker is sick, etc, etc.,

Finally, the chairs were ready and again this kind-hearted man invited us to lunch. He was 15 years older than me and much more experienced and knowledgeable in matters of courtesy and manners.

After lunch, very politely and with a great deal of tact, he talked about the virtues of punctuality. He said that no matter what position one

has or what circumstances may come about, or in what deal or affair one is involved, he must keep his word and respect his promise. For this is how others judge us. With bowed head, I thanked him for his advice and knew that I had learned a great lesson. From that day on I have always tried to be punctual and keep my word and do as promised. Needless to say the moral and material rewards have been great.

THE GARAGE DOOR AND THE TELEPHONE

One day I was standing in the factory courtyard when a man entered the premises and politely said, "I am constructing a building and have already ordered the doors and windows, but the carpenter can not build the garage doors. Could you send someone to take the measurements, construct and install them as soon as possible? I'll pay whatever it costs. I asked, "When can we come to do this?" He said, "I will telephone you". Upon hearing that, my foreman and I started to laugh, for it was more than three years that we had requested a telephone, a very important necessity for our work, and not received it yet.

We had to explain to the customer that the reason for our laughter was that we had no phone for him to call us, and no matter how hard we had tried, we were unsuccessful. In complete surprise he said, "The day after you install my garage doors, you will have your phone".

It did not take more than a minute for us to find out that this gentleman was none other than the very famous writer, Mr. Moti-O-Dooleh Mohamed Hejazi, well known for his stories, poems and literary works. In addition to this, he had an important position in the post, telephone and telegraph ministry.

The doors were measured, built and installed in six days. That

very same day our phone was connected.

From this, I learned the importance of keeping one's promise and the value of sincerity. Mr. Hejazi and I became good friends and whenever I needed literary advice, I went to see him.

THE FACTORY FIRE

Six years after the start-up of the factory, a fire burnt some of it. The reason was never known and I don't want to blame anyone or think that it was on purpose because of jealousy or competition. I believe that you should consider people in a positive way and have no doubts unless the contrary is proven. A cigarette or a spark can easily set dry lumber or wood shavings on fire, without it being done on purpose.

Fortunately, the machines were not burnt. The main damage was to the wood and finished articles. The plant was insured for 50,000 Tomans, but the insurance company was reluctant to settle, claiming that they would pay only after it was proven that the value of what remained was less than 50,000 Tomans. It took two years but they finally paid a token amount.

Although the loss was substantial, I decided not to give up. I loved this work and soon all was as before and we received many orders. Competition was tough and the expenses of running a modern factory were much greater than the hand-worked carpentry shops. Customers sought low prices and often didn't consider quality or prompt delivery, which were our main principles.

THE PTT BUILDING

I remember that the ministry of post, telegraph and telephone was constructing a large modern building on Sepah Avenue and required a great number of doors and windows. The requirements were that the purchase be made only through bidding or adjudication. Our offer was slightly more than the carpentry shops' prices, but the quality far superior, according to the ministry officials. However, since price was the sole determinant, the award went to the others and since my aim was to develop the whole wood working industry, I didn't mind that others got work and the philosophy of "live and let live" was kept in mind.

At that time there were about 200 workers producing doors, windows, chairs, tables, etc., under the supervision of French and German specialists. My satisfaction was complete, for an industry with modern machinery and techniques was created and even today many of the products of the "Sabet Factory" can be seen in buildings and homes of Iran, not only in Teheran but many of the other cities of the country.

Unfortunately, this success was short lived. Like all things that change due to different circumstances, times and conditions, good and bad, ugly or beautiful, we too had to submit to destiny.

The second world war started in 1939 when Germany attacked Poland. Hitler and the axis powers over-ran one European country after another, brought humility on the German people, exterminated millions of Jews and other minorities. Close to 100 million soldiers and civilians lost their lives.

Iran declared its neutrality in 1941, but under the pretext that the Shah was Pro-German, Russian, American and British troops occupied Iran and used its railroads, roads and infrastructure to supply the Russians in their fight against Hitler and built the so called "Victory Bridge". Our factory too was taken over without compensation.

Autumn of 1941 Reza Shah signed his abdication and left Teheran for Isfahan, Kerman and the Port of Bandar Abbas to board a ship for the island of Mauritius, his place of exile. After some time, complaining about the climatic conditions of that place, he was transferred to Johannesburg in South Africa and three years later passed away.

The threat of persecutions against minorities, especially Jews and Baha'is, forced many of my countrymen to leave the country. Seeing little hope for the future, and having nothing to do, I too decided to travel. With my wife, Bahereh, and sons, Iraj 9, and Hormoz 5, we headed for the U.S., where I thought to find work and educate my children, at least for the duration of the war. But before leaving, for one never knows what may happen, I put things in order; sold the shares of Auto-Teheran to the Kattaneh Brothers, put the factory in my father's hands and a small trading company in Momtaz Street in the hands of my trusted brother-in-law Aziz Yazdi.

THE VOYAGE FROM IRAN TO AMERICA

On the 7th of November, 1941, we drove from Teheran via Kermanshah to Baghdad. Because of the war in Europe, it was impossible to go to the U.S. via the Atlantic. The only other possibility was to fly to Singapore and then to San Francisco. After consultation, we decided to do just that. A month later, a plane took us to Singapore with the aim of going on to San Francisco. Mrs. Mary Kattaneh and her son, Tony

and daughter, Joyce were with us. They were fortunate to fly on but we four had to give up our seats to American military personnel.

What could we do? There was a war going on and all rules and regulations were put aside. We were obliged to get on a ship called the "President Coolidge" and follow a long and dangerous route.

The ship left port on December 1, 1941 headed for San Francisco, little knowing what lay ahead. On December 7, 1941 the Japanese bombed Hawaii and attacked "Pearl Harbor". Dozens of ships were sunk, many planes destroyed and thousands of soldiers, sailors and civilians were killed. This caused the U.S. to enter the war on the side of the allies and bring Japan to justice.

NEWS ABOUT THE SINKING OF THE PRESIDENT COOLIDGE

After this event, Japanese submarines were on the lookout to sink any American ship anywhere in the Pacific Ocean. Our ship was such a target.

American radios continuously announced that the "Coolidge" had been sunk. This, to throw off the enemy subs. It worked, for the Japanese no longer looked for us. On the other hand, the news that the "Coolidge" had been sunk caused much concern and sadness among the relatives and friends of those who were on board. We, ourselves, didn't know what might happen at any moment.

Mr. & Mrs. Dallal and their two daughters, Iris and Gladys, were also on this ship. I knew David Dallal in Teheran for he represented Firestone Tires and International Trucks in Iran. We were fortunate to

be together and to keep one another company, especially since their children and ours were the same ages.

Everyday and even some nights we had to practice "Sinking" drills. It was very nerve-wracking and frightening to be in complete black-out, to see curtains drawn at all times, to grope in the dark and expect to be hit by bombs or torpedoes any second. Imagine wearing life jackets all the time, even when trying to sleep, or waiting to hear the sirens to announce that the ship was hit, and big and small should head for the life boats or throw themselves in the chilly water. Moreover, strict instructions were given that the wounded or dying were to be left behind to go down with the ship. Can one imagine leaving his child or husband, or even a stranger to drown? In such circumstances maybe it is better to die rather than witness such a sight.

Days went by, every minute seemed like hours. When would all this finish? Thank God it came to an end, for on December 14th, the S.S. President Coolidge entered the bay of Honolulu. The port was crowded with sunken ships, the smoke of burned buildings, and the agony of thousands of persons was visible everywhere.

To have seen the mass graves, ships with only the upper parts showing above the water, the hospitals filled with the wounded, the orphans in shacks, burnt out factories, stores, cars, homes; makes one sick and tearful at the tragedy and senselessness of wars. May the wrath of the Almighty come upon those who advocate and carry out these bloody wars.

A MEETING WITH AGNES ALEXANDER

The event that brought us away from our sadness was the meeting with a Baha'i lady named Agnes Alexander, who had been appointed a Hand of the Cause* of Baha'u'llah by the Guardian of the Baha'i faith, Shoghi Rabbani. I had noted her address in Teheran before leaving and now, I wanted to find her.

While the ship was docked, the passengers could go sightseeing and shop or visit their friends. We seized the opportunity and found Agnes Alexander sitting in the balcony of a gray, wooden building. Upon introducing ourselves, she let us in her home. What a pleasant and unforgettable encounter, for we had heard much about her and she, having met many Persians during her travels, welcomed us with much love and appreciation. Feelings of unity and warmth surrounded us all.

Mrs. Alexander, who usually resided in Hawaii and served humanity in every way possible, had come here to teach the Baha'i faith to the islanders and had found much joy in talking about this new religion.

She invited us for tea and made us feel at home through her kind hospitality. After a while, she took us to the Baha'i center, a modest wooden building that had been built recently. We met several native Baha'is who welcomed us and together we said prayers for peace and the advancement of mankind.

Twenty years later, Bahereh and I again visited those islands. We were surprised to learn that the small center had been sold for a good price, because it was in the middle of the city, and that with the money, a very large and beautiful building had been built in the outskirts of Honolulu.

ARRIVAL AT SAN FRANCISCO

We said our farewells to Honolulu and our Baha'i friends who had been so hospitable and headed for our port of entry into the U.S. But there were still thousands of miles to go and the nightmares of blackouts, being torpedoed, etc. were with us.

I think that belief in God, no matter what religion one may practice, is a fundamental basis for human existence. It was this faith that kept us hopeful and certain that the Almighty would cause us to reach the mainland.

And so it was on December 25, 1941, that the ship and its joyful (some tearful) passengers reached San Francisco harbor with its bright lights, skyscrapers, and big city activities. The "President Coolidge", after so many weeks of blackouts, turned on all of its lights, and like a floating metallic island entered its berth.

We all collected our suitcases, said good-bye and good luck to the friends we had made during the four week voyage from Singapore to California and went directly to the San Francis hotel, which had been reserved in advance. It was the first night that all four slept well, thanking the Lord for being alive and secure.

The next few weeks were spent sightseeing, shopping and finding new friends. We celebrated the New Year of 1942 with new clothing, and a great hope for the future. We learned much about this large city of 750,000 inhabitants, its origins, the earthquakes; the melting pot of Italians, Chinese and dozens of other nationalities, its factories, world famous universities, the Golden Gate and other bridges, etc,

It was now time to leave San Francisco. Before leaving Iran, I had ordered a four-door Chrysler Sedan and went to the dealer to pick it up and prepare for the trip to Southern California, i.e. Los Angeles and Hollywood.

We decided to stay three months in southern California, just to relax and enjoy ourselves. I must say that this was one of the best periods of my life.

An apartment was rented in "Hollywood Towers" for \$80 a month, having two bedrooms, a living-dining room, kitchen and a hall and bathrooms. We visited the various film studios and even met some of the famous personalities. These encounters brought to mind the artistic capabilities of human beings and also the tremendous advances made by science. I realized that man is often unconscious of his abilities. I remembered the words of Napoleon: "The impossible is impossible", in other words, impossible does not exist! Of course, this thought has its limitations, but, in general, it means that what can be accomplished is even greater than what we can imagine.

Again, I refer to another of Napoleon's sayings that goes like this: "It is pessimism that prevents us from achieving our highest aspirations, for man has whatever it takes to reach his desires".

Once again, we had the pleasure of meeting many Baha'is who made us feel at home by their hospitality and help. Their spiritual outlook not only brought joy to themselves and whomever they met, but helped us to better understand Americans. Those three months were wonderful and among the Baha'is there was Marzieh Gail, the daughter of Nabi-Dowleh and Ali Gholi Khan, who organized many meetings or "Firesides" so that we could speak about Iran and our travels.

ON TO THE EAST COAST

It was now April and time to leave for Chicago and New York. Bahereh, Iraj, Hormoz and myself put all of our belongings in the green Chrysler (photo 12) and headed East.

Traveling by car has its advantages. One can start and stop at will, interesting landmarks can be seen leisurely and most of all, one can enjoy nature by picnicking, seeing the pastures, farms, cities, villages, etc.

On the way to Chicago, we spent a night at Geyserville farm as the guests of its owner, a man of 80. He told my wife that if she so wished, she could prepare a Persian meal. Bahereh was delighted and cooked rice and a sauce called "Fesenjan". But because there was no pomegranate juice available, she used orange juice as an ingredient.

After dinner and before going to his bedroom, our host said that he gets up at 7 am, but we could sleep late and have our breakfast at will. I asked him why so early? He replied that he personally prunes the orange trees, waters them, and so on. I was surprised that a man of his age had the energy and patience to do all that.

Next morning I, too, got up early and accompanied him. He virtually ran up a high, steep hill as though it was nothing; and I at 38 could hardly keep up with him. After a short time, I expressed my fatigue but he said that he wasn't the least tired. Very politely, I asked him, "With all of these orange groves and the wealth that you possess, why do you, yourself take the time and trouble to work and continue to plant even more saplings? You are on in years and may never see these young

trees give fruit?" He replied, "You are right, but my aim in planting these trees, is not that I should eat or sell the fruits; I believe that as others planted and now we benefit from their work, we should plant now so others in the future may benefit from our doings."

Hearing this, my thoughts went back to a Persian story telling about a very old man planting walnut trees. Upon the remark that he would not live long enough to pick the walnuts, he replied, "Others planted and we eat them, let me plant, that others may eat them."

That story and this encounter clearly told me that I too should plan my life in such a way that the results of my endeavors would benefit as many people as possible and should not be limited to my own benefit or existence.

After saying good-bye and thanking our host for his hospitality and the experiences that he shared with us, we set out for Chicago, the big city that was surrounded with industries of all sorts as well as being considered one of the important commercial hubs of the world. Almost everything needed was at the disposal of these people, but often one does not appreciate what one has, especially in comparison with conditions in other countries.

THE POLICE AND A TICKET

Although we had a road map, we lost our way and found ourselves in a small town in the outskirts of Chicago. While trying to find the right road, we heard a continuous siren. Not having heard a similar sound before, and thinking that it has nothing to do with us, we just continued. Then a police car pulled alongside and told me to stop. Two officers approached and said, "Don't you realize that you entered a one-

way street? You're liable for a fine! Show me your driving license." I told him we are new in your country, have lost our way, don't know why we should be fined and what was the meaning of one-way. The second officer said "You'll first pay a fine of \$15, and then we'll tell you about a one-way street!"

I was surprised and didn't know what to do. First, because I didn't think a mistake had been made. Second, because \$15 converted into Iranian money was a great deal to pay. Third, if I went down a one-way street, it was because we were lost. I told the story exactly as it was, hoping the police would understand. As they were quite angry, they didn't accept my excuses. So I tried another tactic. I said, "I am surprised at the way you Americans treat foreigners. For, if an American came to Iran, we would be very hospitable and show the visitor much respect and do our best to make him happy. But when we Persians enter your country, instead of helping us find the way and teaching us what to do, you scold and give us a ticket".

It worked! He became very friendly and said, "I won't give you a ticket this time, and follow me so I can show you the way to Chicago." By telling the truth, we were not fined, were put on the right road and told the American police a little about Iran.

ARRIVAL IN CHICAGO

We checked into a hotel that had a beautiful view and was so centrally located that we could learn and wonder about all the different aspects of this huge metropolis.

However, the second day we found out that our younger son, Hormoz, aged 5, had measles. This made everyone concerned, but the hotel

manager said not to worry and called in a doctor. He started the treatment by pulling the curtains and turning off the lights, so the room would be dark, ordered complete rest and warned that the patient should not scratch himself and finally, to be patient, for it will take a week or 10 days to cure.

The doctor learned that we were from Iran and asked many questions about that country. He became very sympathetic when I told him about our trials and tribulations, especially the part about the voyage from Singapore to San Francisco. He asked about my work in Iran, the problems that we had to reach the U.S. and about the future education of Iraj and Hormoz.

We became good friends and his frequent visits to see how his patient was getting along impressed us a great deal. Here was a man dedicated to his profession and at the same time, humane, courteous and humble.

The day of his last visit, I asked him what was owed. He replied that what he did for my son was not for money but to help a family in a foreign land and to show the friendship that most Americans offer their fellowmen.

Realizing that he would not accept money, I gave him a hand-worked box inlaid with brass, mother of pearl and teak wood, which we had brought from Iran. This token of our gratitude and a souvenir from Iran pleased him a great deal.

From this I learned that to help others and serve humanity is one of the noblest things that man can do, for he is the highest form of creation and by good actions he can prove this.

It was now April 20th, and the day in which the delegates and others of the American Baha'i community gathered in Willamette, just outside of Chicago, for the annual convention. We were fortunate to attend and meet most of the 250 people who were there to discuss ways and means to eliminate the prejudices of race, color, religion, and nationalism that were causing the hatred, jealousy and wars in various parts of the world. The main topic was the establishment of world peace and unity among the people and nations of this planet.

The sessions were held in the Mashrogh-Ol-Askar, (Bahai house of worship) which is comparable to a mosque, church or synagogue. It is here and in similar houses of worship all over the world that Baha'is and people of other faiths assemble to pray and meditate and give thanks to God or the supreme creator.

This building, located along the shores of Lake Michigan in the State of Illinois, is nine-sided, made of white cement and granite and has become world famous for its architectural design and beauty. Tourists, persons interested in world religions, engineers, architects and people from all walks of life visit this structure in great numbers. Similar Baha'i houses of worship exist in Uganda, Sydney, Samoa, Panama, Frankfurt and New Delhi. The first one was constructed in the City of Eshghabad in the Soviet Union at the turn of the century, but was destroyed by an earthquake some years ago.

While in Chicago, we visited the many museums and the trade center and learned that this city has five universities, is the second largest American metropolis in population, and is surrounded by many industries, slaughter-houses, steel mills, etc.

ARRIVAL IN NEW YORK

The month of April was coming to an end. Because of Hormoz's illness, we did not see as much of Chicago as was desired, but at least the Baha'i convention made up for that.

It was early May that our faithful Chrysler took us into New York, the biggest, busiest city and port of the United States. The weather was getting warmer and Spring had arrived.

We lodged in a hotel on West 65th Street, while looking for an apartment. Fortunately, one was found at 480 Park Avenue. The owners, an insurance company, had many empty apartments and were anxious to find a customer, especially since the price of real estate was on down. I was able to rent it for \$300 a month, a figure that was affordable. Furniture and other necessities were bought and soon it became our new home.

At that time there weren't many Iranians in New York, but it did not take long for me to find some of my old friends such as Motahedeh, Haghani, Manouchehrian, Farhadi and Khosrowshahi.

As stated before, there were two reasons for me to leave Iran. First, the threat of war and invasion of our country. Second, the wish to educate our two sons to the best of their mother's and my ability. I believe that the foremost responsibility of parents is to bring up and educate their children, making any sacrifice to achieve that aim.

Iraj was 9, and Hormoz 5. We were advised to put them in boarding school, for in that way, they could learn English quickly. A school was found about 20 miles north of New York City and Iraj was enrolled first.

Later, Hormoz was enrolled. I remember the day we drove him up. He started to cry, saying, "You are going to leave me alone! I don't know anyone here." And although his mother and I too were saddened and had to brush our tears aside, we knew that this was to his benefit and one day, no one would regret this decision. (Photo 18) Regarding their education, I am happy that their mother and myself took the care and made the sacrifices needed so that they could have the best.

Iraj, who was born in Teheran in the year 1931, entered Horace Mann in 1942 in New York. He went on to get a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, and later obtained a Master of Business Administration degree from Harvard University in 1956.

Hormoz, born in 1936 in Teheran, also went to Horace Mann and continued his studies at the University of Pennsylvania and got a Bachelor of Science in Economics.

The whole idea was that our two sons obtain their schooling in a country that could offer the best and most advanced education and with that, return to their native country and further the progress and development of Iran.

With the help of the Almighty this was achieved and after completing their studies, they went back and did the best they could to advance the cause of commerce and industry.

Iraj directed the 12 Zamzam plants (producing Pepsi Cola, Schweppes, and other soft drinks), managed Mina glass factory, Iran Cork, and was on the Board of Directors of General Tire of Iran, Iran Gas and Cylinder, Radio Television of Iran, Esso (Exxon) Lube Plant, and the

Bank of Iran and the Middle East. He was also a member of the Lions Club and on the Board of the Foundation of Damavand University.

Hormoz was President of Firooz Trading Company (selling household appliances, T.V. receivers, wood working machinery, etc) on the Board of General Tires Recapping Plant, Radio-T.V. of Iran, Sabet-Pasal Company (Importers of Volkswagen); Iranian's Bank, Revlon of Iran, Transpic, Esso (Exxon), Mina Glass, and Iran Gas, etc.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEW YORK OFFICE

Once the boy's education was under way, I turned my attention to opening a small office at 30 Rockefeller Plaza. My first activity was to start correspondence with Iran.

I asked Mr. Moosa Haghani to join me so together we could look into various business possibilities. His Persian and English were perfect. Moreover, we were distant relatives. His experiences and good judgment were invaluable. We had very good relations and even up to today, myself and the family count on his advice.

Our plan was to import from Iran and Export American products. One of the items considered was Persian carpets. But soon we found out that for the time being, there was not much demand for rugs. To import pistachios and other food stuffs didn't appeal to me. So what should we do?

Maybe the best way to find a suitable answer was to consult with those who had the knowledge and experience. For I believe, and it has been written in all the Holy Books, that consultation is the perfect method to resolve a problem. In history, we read that those who had advisors

and consulted with them, such as Genjis Khan the conqueror, they usually won. Others, such as Amir Taymour or Napoleon, who were reluctant to consult and insisted on their own way, lost.

After discussing what to do, we decided to import a special tree sap (Gum Arabic) which was used for making pharmaceuticals, candies and other food stuffs. After several shipments, which did not sell well because there were others with much more knowledge and contacts, we gave up this affair.

In the meantime, we hired a German refugee, Richard Goetter, whose many years in the export and import business, integrity and hard work became an invaluable asset.

After many studies, it became clear that our best bet was to start exporting U.S. products. But there was a war going on and all the ships were being used by the American Government to transport military goods. The only way to send things to Iran was in small packages called "Parcel Post."

During one of the Shah's trips to the U.S., the Iranian businessmen asked me to welcome His Majesty and make a small speech about the relations between the two countries. I remember well that he encouraged us to return to Iran and establish commercial and industrial enterprises. (Photo 19).

FIROOZ COMPANY IS FORMED

Those days, the only way to communicate between the U.S. and Iran was by telegraph. No telephone or airline existed.

The people of Iran were in need of everything and because of the war in Europe and the Pacific all items had become scarce. Those living in Teheran were especially hungry for American goods.

If I wanted to export to Iran, reliable persons would have to be found there, but being so far away, on whom could I count? After much thought, it was decided to create a private company with the name "Firooz Trading Corp." to be supervised by my father (photo 20). Mr. Aziz Yazdi, my brother-in-law was appointed General Manager. Light-weight items such as ladies stockings, tooth brushes and paste, pens and pencils, pharmaceuticals etc. were sent via Parcel Post. This business of exporting American goods to Iran became so successful that a second company had to be created.

Some of my old friends such as Asghar Panahi, Emile Abboud, Alexander Saffian and Dr. Mohsen Lak had formed a company called "Pasal", comprising a letter from each of their names. They contacted me, suggesting a joint venture be set up with the title "Sabet-Pasal". This new company would benefit from the possibilities of the New York office of Habib Sabet and the existing Teheran organization of "Pasal". Our main asset was the trust and confidence that we had for one another.

Soon orders came from Teheran to find and buy this or that. Mr. Goetter and myself would seek the highest quality goods at the best prices and ship them to Iran.

One of the items that had a high demand was tires. In April of 1944, after participating at the Baha'i convention in Chicago, I made a trip to Akron, Ohio, which was the center of tire manufacturing. I met Mr. William O'Neill the owner and manager of General Tire Co., and told

him about my experiences in the automotive field and the possibilities of the Iranian market. After much discussion, a visit to the plant and the promise that Sabet-Pasal would do their best to sell General Tires, he agreed to sign a contract. While doing so he asked me, "Where is Iran?" With a smile, I told him of its location, past history and so on. Then he wanted to know if I could place an order, to which I agreed and the first order amounting to \$530 was signed.

Next, we had to find a way to get these tires to Iran. All transport permits were issued by the U.S. Department of Commerce. First, I visited and then wrote to the office that was in charge. We acknowledged that times were difficult, a war was going on, etc., but the matter was that all the vehicles produced in America and operating in Iran needed U.S. tires.

After many exchanges of letters and running around, they said that a blanket permission is impossible, but every case would be reviewed and once determined when and where the goods were going, an export license would be given. So far so good!

The first shipment totaling \$530 arrived at the Persian Gulf Port of Khorram Shahr, was trucked to Teheran, and immediately sold. This encouraged the Board of Sabet-Pasal to order and reorder in greater quantities. To be sure that we could get enough, I told General Tire that we are willing to pay a premium price on condition that all of our orders are shipped as soon as possible. In this way, Sabet-Pasal company was put on a priority list. Thus the customers were well stocked and happy, we made profits, and the name "General Tire" became well known. Our purchases were on the top of General's export list. An American company that didn't even know where Iran was, exported more to that country than anywhere else. The Iranian

market became so important that they sent a permanent representative to Teheran to help us sell even more.

THE DECISION TO PUT UP A TIRE PLANT

The reputation of General Tire increased continuously and the marketing strategy was so good that it became the number one seller in Iran, especially truck and heavy duty tires. This success brought about the idea of producing locally and inviting General Tire of Akron to participate in a joint venture. Our competitors weren't happy about this, but since our aim was to help industrialize the country and create jobs, the Ministry of Industry gave us their approval and complete support.

The factory would be located in Teheran. In 1964, 30,000 square meters of land was bought, a building was constructed and machinery and equipment installed to produce 20,000 tons of tires. (Photo 21)

In July of 1965, the first Iranian built tires entered the market. However, the capacity was not enough to satisfy the demand. Therefore, we were obliged to import the shortfall in order to satisfy our customers and keep our share of the market. This customer satisfaction was the most important asset that we had and through it good public relations were established. Seeing that the demand was there, we obtained a second permit to double the capacity. At the beginning, the daily production was 430 tires but by 1974, it reached 2900 units.

The Board of Directors of General Tire of Iran was made up of expatriates, mostly Americans and 4 Iranians, namely Emile Abboud, engineer Asghar Panahi, Dr. Mohsen Lak and Iraj Sabet. At this point,

I would like to thank all of them for their devotion and hard work, for it was they who directed this huge undertaking with much success.

The start of my business life from 1921 was bicycles, cars and trucks. Now, we were producing tires by the hundreds of thousands each year and providing jobs, products and services. The many years of patience and perseverance were now coming into fruition. I realized that an honorable profession or business will succeed, but you need experience and knowledge to get ahead.

The desire to serve General Tire of Iran to the best of his ability caused Iraj to spend many months in Akron to better learn the details of the tire industry. In his capacity as Vice-Chairman, he contributed much to the progress of this company.

Bahereh and I had always wanted to travel by ship from Europe to America. Having worked hard these last few years, we decided to take a small vacation and spend a few days away from it all. We did this in 1948. (Photo 22).

THE STUDEBAKER DEALERSHIP

As stated a few times, my main interest was the automotive business. I always wanted to obtain an American automobile dealership. But all the major companies already had an agent, except Studebaker. On several occasions I contacted their management in Indiana and finally, in 1944, accompanied by my wife Bahereh, we made a trip to their headquarters. The President of the company was pleased to hear about my past, starting my career as an automobile driver, then the trucking company and finally my involvement in the Chrysler Dealership in Iran.

The Second World War was still going on and the U.S. needed all the vehicles that were produced. After many discussions, Studebaker and the U.S. Government accepted that right after the war, a limited number of vehicles would be allocated to Iran. (Photo 23)

Once the war was over, we made the first shipment of 8 cars to the Port of Khorram Shahr, from where they were driven to Teheran. Because of the good relations between our company and Studebaker and the shipping line, we ordered and sent hundreds of cars and trucks every year. The sales manager of the vehicle division of Sabet-Pasal company was Mr. Mahmoud Khamsi (my brother-in-law). One of his innovations was to encourage a group of drivers to form the first taxi company, using Studebaker cars.

THE VOLKSWAGEN AGENCY

Due to extreme competition, the Studebaker company had to close its doors, which meant that Sabet-Pasal had to look elsewhere to import cars. Because of the good relations between the Studebaker management and the Volkswagen importer of Belgium, they tried to get us a certain quantity of Volkswagens from their quota to be shipped to Iran. But this was not possible, due to the fact that Volkswagen of Germany, or the parent company already had a distributor for Iran called "Vahabzadeh Brothers", who were importing hundreds of cars and therefore, there was no need for another dealer.

But destiny has its own plans. For disunity among the Vahabzadehs brought their activities to a halt and caused the export department of Volkswagen to seek and find a new importer. One can imagine that when that news got out, there were dozens of candidates who

contacted the German Embassy to apply for this important representation.

As I was in Teheran at that time, I decided to go and see the Commercial Attaché. He received me but said, "I think your application is too late and maybe by now Volkswagen has taken its decision. Not being in the habit of taking a "No" for an answer, I asked him to telegraph our request anyway.

After about a month Volkswagen sent a reply to Sabet-Pasal company stating that they would like to meet us.

The purpose behind creating such a small car was to make it so economical and low cost that everyone could afford one. The project was started during Hitler's regime and the attractive and huge factory was located in a huge open space in Northern Germany called "Wolfsburg". The plants were well laid out and the latest technology in automotive engineering was used. The company had built houses, apartments, schools, stores, restaurants, etc., for its thousands of employees and workers.

After arriving and being met at the airport of Hanover, our hosts drove us to the main offices, which were an hour's distance.

The export manager and his assistants welcomed us and said, "We have some information about you and your past experiences, but wanted to meet you personally and hear more."

I told them about my childhood, the bicycle days, the automobile period, the trucking company, the Auto-Teheran car agency, the years in America, the Studebaker dealership, etc.

The next evening we had dinner together, visited the small town and during the good-byes were told that this visit was routine and that all applicants had passed some time at Wolfsburg. The final selection would be made later. As we left, I had little hope that Sabet-Pasal would be chosen.

A little later, a letter arrived inviting us to Wolfsburg and their offices for the second time. The same scenario repeated itself, and after visiting the factory, they told us that we would be invited for dinner.

At 6:30 our hosts arrived at the guest house and contrary to the last trip, this time they drove us to one of the main buildings in which they had a sort of "Club" to entertain their guests.

We were led to the dinning room and I was placed at the head of a long table. On the other side sat the managing director of Volkswagen and on the sides, the marketing, technical and financial managers. The room was well arranged and beautiful flowers decorated the table.

When the four course dinner had been served, the managing director, along with his collaborators, rose with a glass of champagne in his hand. He said, "After thoroughly evaluating the 46 applicants and researching all the facts, the Board of Directors has decided to appoint Habib Sabet and thus, Sabet-Pasal Company, as the new dealer of Volkswagen for Iran. I am pleased to congratulate you and wish the best success for the both of us."

Standing, they all raised their glasses and drank the champagne. Bahereh and I too raised our glasses, brought them to our lips, but did not drink because of our religious beliefs about alcoholic beverages.

While all were standing, I thanked them on my own behalf as well as my partners in Sabet-Pasal Company. Then, I asked, "Why did you choose our group among all the applicants?"

The Managing Director, in a voice which reflected his candor and friendliness, said, "In addition to technical and commercial reasons, there were three other considerations. First, you did not boast or exaggerate your achievements. Second, the other 46 candidates used every way possible, such as having banks, politicians, men of influence, etc., bring pressure on us, whereas you did not ask even one person or organization to recommend your company. This shows that you could stand on your own and had faith and determination. Third, whenever we asked the others about you, they would say that you didn't have enough capital, were not suitable for this important dealership, were not well known, were Baha'i, Jewish, etc. On the other hand, you never made negative remarks or tried to belittle the others. These 3 factors convinced us that you have courage, are honest, and show consideration for others."

The next day the contract was signed and we flew to Paris and then to Teheran. This was a journey of material and moral victory.

THE FOUNDING OF IRAN VOLKS

Volkswagen vehicles, which already had a good name in Iran, became even more popular. The demand for cars and spare parts was so great that at times we had to arrange special quick shipments at additional costs to keep the pipeline filled and our customers satisfied.

A new organization was needed, so a company with the name "Iran Volks" was formed to take care of this fast growing sector of our

businesses. While signing the incorporation papers, I remembered Napoleons words, "To conquer is easy - to keep and administer is difficult."

Our aim was to keep our customers satisfied and give them the attention and service which they required. It wasn't important that they be big or small as long as they were a customer. It has often been seen that a small, so called unimportant client who is dissatisfied, can influence and deter others.

An important part of our imports were Volkswagen ambulances. These were bought by hospitals, clinics, the Iranian Red Cross and the Ministry of Health. Because of humanitarian reasons and a belief that business should serve the community, we kept the prices very low and satisfied ourselves with a minimum profit. Thus, God's blessings were showered on all.

THE ESSO (EXXON) DEALERSHIP

Having an important base such as Volkswagen encouraged us to obtain other automotive agencies, such as lubricants, electrical components, batteries, tools, jacks, etc. Thus, we started to import Esso oils, greases, and lubricants for the automotive and aviation industries from the U.S.

In 1965, the Sabet-Pasal partners decided that the volume of imports had reached such a high level that local production should be considered. Esso International was not in agreement with this idea. First, because they wanted to export their own products. Second, they argued that the National Iranian Oil Company was establishing its own

lubricant plant in Abadan and would surely oppose a foreign competitor.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LUBRICATING PLANT

Despite the forgoing, our decision was firm because we knew that by building such a plant, a new industry would be added for the progress of Iran and hundreds of new jobs would be created.

It took two years of discussions in Geneva, New York, and Teheran, with the cooperation of Esso, the Ministry of Economy, and finally with the wish of the Shah, who wanted the Iranian industries to develop, that an accord was reached.

Esso, being an international oil company and having put up dozens of plants all over the world, provided all the technical assistance, plant layouts and the purchase of the best machinery. On our part, we purchased a big plot of land in South Teheran, next to the N.I.O.C. refinery. The initial capital was \$4,700,000 and the capacity rated at 30,000 tons of oil. In a short time, the output was increased to 60,000 tons per year. It took about 15 months to become operational, but when it happened, all our trials, concerns, and efforts were rewarded.

A helicopter brought the Shah to the site and he, as well as many Ministers and foreign guests, attended the opening ceremonies. (Photo 24)

Our joint-venture partner Esso sent many engineers and technicians, as well as a managers to Iran to help start the operations. The company called "Towlid & Tasfieh Roughan" (Oil Production & Refinery) also sent many young Iranians to be trained abroad.

From the beginning, the board appointed engineer Foud Ashraf to be the technical manger. He did a splendid job, especially that he was very conscientious and had many years experience having worked a long time for the National Oil Company in Abadan.

TWO MORE PLANTS

To ship the lubricants to the markets of Teheran and the Provinces, thousands of containers were needed. So, two production lines were established next to the main plant, one to produce drums and the other for round and square cans. Needless to say, filling machines were also installed and vertical integration was implemented. In 1979, the number of employees and workers totaled 400 persons.

OTHER AGENCIES

In order to serve our customers to the utmost, we decided to increase the number of products imported.

Auto-lite, a famous manufacturer of spark plugs, batteries, and other automotive electrical parts gave us their representation. To better sell and service these items, in 1950, a separate company was created by the name of "Auto Nour," under the capable management of Mr. Faramarz Ashraf.

Soon, mechanical and hydraulic jacks and lifts, tools, electric generators, gasoline and diesel pumps, and lift trucks were being imported from such companies as Murphy Diesel, Pierce Strato, Gilbarco, Snap-On-Tools, Yale and Towne, etc.

BEEHCRAFT AIRPLANES

It became apparent that in Western countries, small airplanes were being used very often for private or corporate use. In a country like Iran with bad roads, long distances and few airline connections, it was natural that an aircraft agency would be appropriate. We contacted the Beech Air Craft Corporation, which had a world wide reputation for two, four and six seater planes. Mr. Beech and his secretary had many years ago built their first small aircraft in a garage. Then a factory was put up. On one of their visits to New York, my wife and I met them at the Plaza Hotel (photo 25) where much was discussed about the future of aviation in Iran. A short while later, we obtained their representation and ordered a single-engine plane called "Bonanza". Soon thereafter, the Ministry of Health bought two units as flying ambulances. A four seater was bought by a rancher in Isfahan by the name of Asghar Teherani Massoud. A two-engine plane with all the trimmings was bought by the Shah, who enjoyed flying and was a capable pilot. And finally, a special Bonanza was ordered for the Crown-Prince, Reza Pahlavi.

THE AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY AGENCIES

There being large and small farms all over Iran, there was a growing need for mechanization. So tractors, harvesters, plows, etc. were much in demand.

I made a trip to the mid-American State of Minnesota and visited a company called "Minneapolis-Moline". They made a variety of agricultural machines, which had many attachments for all kinds of

farm use. The agency was obtained for Sabet-Pasal and Mr. Mahmoud Khamsi was appointed manager of that department. Through his efforts and the fact that the Ministry of Agriculture was giving long term loans, we were able to import thousands of units and thus render a service to that sector of the economy.

Some years later, we added a Japanese company by the name of Yanmar, which made small hand-pushed but motorized tractors, especially for the smaller farms and rice fields of Northern Iran.

CONSTRUCTION MACHINES

Parallel to the development of industries and agriculture, the building and construction sector was expanding very, very rapidly. The government provided low interest loans and land speculation was the order of the day.

Again, Sabet-Pasal obtained the representation of such companies as Letournou, Westinghouse, Tower, cranes made by a French company named Richier, graders made by Wabco, etc.

EXPANSION OF FIROOZ

In 1944, when the Second World War was at its height, Iran was in dire need of pharmaceuticals and health products. We then decided to extend Firooz Company's activities and try to serve our country.

Messrs. Ashraf and Arjomand, the latter my maternal uncle, were well known for their business acumen and many years experience in management. They joined Firooz's Board of Directors. Our aim was to

import pharmaceuticals, health care products, surgical and x-ray equipment, even ambulances, and sell them at very low prices all over the nation.

Household appliances, as we know them now, did not exist in Iran at that time. Heating at home, work, or school was done with charcoal, wood or kerosene. Fire was a hazard and these crude heaters needed constant surveillance.

I went to Chicago in 1945 to attend a trade show and after a thorough comparison, chose the "Duo-Therm" brand of kerosene air and water heaters. The design was very attractive and the function very simple. The agency agreement was signed and thousands of these units were imported and sold in the cities, towns and even villages of Iran.

Soon, the name "Duo-Therm" became so famous that any one who wanted a heater, under any mark would simply say, "Give me a Duo-Therm."

In those days, with the exception of some wealthy people who had their own baths at home, the masses went to public baths. There, one had to wait on line, go through the trouble of changing clothing and even worse, the sanitary conditions, source of clean water, diseases, etc. were a continuous concern. With these individual water heaters installed in many homes, the question of cleanliness and public health was vastly improved.

Most of the latest innovations, inventions and discoveries attracted our attention. When the product became available in Europe or America, we immediately considered it for our markets.

For example, it was in 1946 that I saw for the first time an electric shaver. My thoughts went back to many years ago when the straight razor, sharpened on a leather strap, or the Gillette shaver, with lather, warm water, etc. was in use. How times change! Soon, we obtained the "Phillips" agency for Firooz Company and started to distribute its various products.

In those days, cooking was by means of wood or charcoal. The stove in itself was the heart of the dwelling and the meeting point of the family and friends. It had a social value. Anyway, it was at the Chicago fair that I saw various cooking stoves and ranges. Why not import them for Iranian homes I thought? After exchange of several letters with a company called "Magic Chef", we obtained their agency and like other items, hundreds at first, and then thousands of cooking ranges were sold to satisfied homeowners.

ICE AND ICE MAKING IN IRAN

From centuries ago, Persians used ice to preserve food, mix it in their summer desserts or just to keep cool. Even Saadi, the famous poet, mentions it in his "Golestan".

The clever method used to produce and keep ice was to build a long but very tall wall in a field, observing the sun's path so as to have the maximum shade. Then, a wide ditch would be dug at the base of the wall and at the beginning of winter water would be poured into the ditch. The cold nights would freeze the water and during the day time, the tall walls would prevent the sun's rays from warming or melting the ice. In reality a huge ice-maker was created and in larger cities, several of them.

In the Spring and Summer, the owners of these "Ice makers" would break up the ice and sell it to stores, homes, cafes, etc.

Once the ice was bought, it was not easy to keep it from melting. So, Sabet carpentry company, which had experience in making cabinets of all sorts, designed an "ice chest" and soon made it a reality. It consisted of a wooden box with a hinged cover. Inside the chest, there was placed a galvanized box, a bit smaller than the outer one. In between these two, an empty space of about 3 inches (10 cm) was filled with sawdust, thus creating insulation. Since there was no other "appliance" to keep the ice from melting, this innovation solved the problem and thousands of such ice chests were bought by home owners and shops.

THE FIRST ELECTRIC REFRIGERATOR

Electricity made its presence in Teheran many years ago. The first thoroughfare in the capitol, which had previously been lit by gas, but now benefited from electricity, was called, at first, "Gas Light"; and now "Electric Light" street. The first power plant was put up by Haj Amin Alzarb and later dozens of others were established. Despite this, there was always a shortage of electricity and "Black-outs" were common.

Therefore, the idea came to me to find a refrigerator that could work without electricity. A Swedish company by the name of Electrolux made a kerosene refrigerator called "Servel". Firooz company started to import them and soon areas of Teheran and towns and villages where electricity was in shortage benefited from these appliances.

As more power plants were installed throughout Iran, the demand for electric refrigerators increased tremendously. Companies such as

General Electric, Westinghouse, etc. had representatives already. Fortunately, Kelvinator was available. Firooz contacted this American company and in 1946, I traveled to Detroit to obtain the agency. Thousands of refrigerators entered Iran and the market became so important that local manufacturing was started. By the 70's and 80's, Iran was even exporting to the Gulf States and the other neighboring countries.

SQUIBB PHARMACEUTICALS

In 1941 when my family and I left Teheran for the United States, there was a great shortage of medicine, basically because it came from Europe and especially England, where the war had just started.

Once in New York, I contacted Merck, Upjohn, Lilly-White and others to see if they had products that could be sent to Iran. The reply was always, "No".

Our apartment was at the corner of 58th street and a company called Squibb had their offices on the next block. It was easy for me to visit them often, but the answer was always the same, "We are not authorized to export pharmaceuticals". Finally, I said, "Is there any product that you can sell me"? They replied, "Our famous Squibb toothpaste". I bought 3 dozen tubes and sent them by parcel post to my father. I had now become a customer of Squibb.

Sometime later my father sent me a telegram, "Please send 100 dozen tubes of toothpaste." I sent packages in the name of the employees and even workers of his company, "Abdullah Sabet Imports." The Squibb name became so famous that soon thousands of dozens of tubes were being exported.

PENICILLIN TO IRAN

In 1928 a British doctor by the name of Alexander Fleming discovered Penicillin. However, it was not before the Second World War that its use became very important. This God given antibiotic not only saved the lives of millions of soldiers, but also helped civilians to fight all sorts of diseases.

Again my thoughts went towards finding a way to introduce this "miracle medicine" to our doctors back home. I approached the management of Squibb and asked if I could buy a few tubes as samples to send to Iran and maybe help some patients in dire need. They accepted, gave me a few packages and didn't even charge me for them. With a great deal of joy and without hesitation, they were sent to our office in Teheran with a message that read, "As soon as they arrive, contact the Ministry of Health and cable me the results."

It wasn't long that a cable came with an order for immediate shipment of several thousand vials of Penicillin. I took the request to Squibb who took it upon themselves to obtain the necessary permits from the U.S. Government. A private plane was chartered and the shipment sent on its way. (Photo 26)

I was very happy that this first shipment and others that followed permitted my country-men and women to benefit from this drug. I felt that because my intention was pure and not profit motivated, the Almighty rewarded me amply and for that I am thankful.

The management of Squibb decided to help Firooz to train salesmen and to organize a vast distribution network. Branch offices were

created in the provinces and the name of Squibb became so well known that a few years later a joint-venture plant was set up to produce certain pharmaceuticals locally.

A plot of land was bought by Firooz and Squibb 9 kilometers outside of Teheran. Laboratories, manufacturing and packing were all housed in a modern building. Iranian chemists and lab technicians were hired and trained by specialists from the U.S. and European countries.

Once the Squibb plant became operational, other companies from all over the world decided to set up their own factories in Iran.

In order to keep up this continuous program of aiding the country and providing the best in medical and health care, Firooz imported "Coricidin", a cold remedy from Schering of Bloomfield, New Jersey. Later, these pills were also manufactured locally.

Turning to hospital and clinical needs such as x-ray equipment, etc., we contacted several American manufacturers, only to be turned down because they said the great distances made servicing of these sophisticated machines difficult. I decided to go to Holland and visit the "Philips" company of Eindhoven. There, I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Philips. I told him that the people of Iran are familiar with the name Philips through radios, shavers and household appliances and that they trust the Philips Company. "Why should they be deprived of other products such as x-ray machines and operating room equipment?" I asked. Dr. Philips said that these highly technical and sensitive instruments needed to have well trained specialists to run them and that there must be an ample supply of spares and finally good servicemen. "Are you ready to undertake all this?" he asked. I replied, "Of course!"

Two months later, the first x-ray unit was shipped and a capable person arrived in Teheran to install and operate it and teach others.

REVLON

In New York, a Mr. Revson decided to introduce beauty products under the name "Revlon". Needless to say, today it has a world-wide reputation.

In 1945, while living in Manhattan, I went to find the above company and asked if we could buy their nail polish, lipstick, creams, etc. for Iran. The answer was, "With pleasure". So I sent a few dozen boxes and cartons of their various items by parcel post to Teheran.

Soon, the women and young ladies of Iran so favored Revlon that thousands of packages were being imported. Again, the demand became so great that Revlon and Firooz created a joint-venture to manufacture locally.

The plant was nearing completion and production would have begun shortly were it not for the revolution of 1979 and the prohibition of all beauty goods.

ZAM ZAM CO. PEPSI COLA

It was in 1940, while walking in one of the main streets of Teheran that I observed a man filling empty bottles with water drawn from a nearby canal. Then, with a small spoon, he would pour a mixture of sugar and colored powder into each bottle, push his finger into the

mouth of the bottle and shake it for a few seconds. Next, he would take a metal crown, put it on the top and with a small hammer bang it into place. Finally, he would glue a strip of paper on which was written the word "Lamar" over the cap and neck of the bottle. My curiosity forced me to ask him what he was doing. He replied very politely and proudly that he was producing a soft drink called "Lamar" and with that offered me an uncapped but filled bottle.

Another day I was passing Sepah Avenue and noticed a man sitting in a garage surrounded by used Sardine and Pickle cans. With a big scissors, he would cut small round plates, place them in a sort of mold and hammer away until a fringed crown was formed.

When asked what he was producing the reply was, "Crowns for drinks such as Lamar and others". Now I became aware that these were the same caps that were used by the bottler that I had seen a few days ago.

During the years that we were in the U.S., Bahereh, myself and especially Iraj and Hormoz, came to know and enjoy soft drinks such as Coca-Cola, Pepsi Cola and others. One day in New York while having lunch, Iraj said to me, "You have brought so many new products and industries to Iran. Why don't we put up a Coca-Cola plant?" My thoughts went back to the "Lamar" bottler, the unsanitary crowns, the polluted water and so on.

I replied, "Maybe we should consider this suggestion and offer the public something new and refreshing and at the same time make a profit." But in reality, I did not see my own possibilities to accomplish this. But on the other hand, I realized that if I approached an international soft drink company maybe they would be interested to

work with us. So Pepsi Cola was contacted and certain basic information gathered. But so many other activities kept me busy. Also, the question of creating and marketing such a product and the uncertainties of whether there would be a general and sufficient acceptance made me hesitant.

However, the idea fascinated me, especially since this was yet another way to help the industrialization of the country, create many jobs, provide a product for thousands of shop, cafe, kiosk and restaurant owners, and eventually give millions of my countrymen, women and children a clean, healthy and inexpensive drink.

I decided to resume my discussions with Pepsi Cola and go all out to make this a success. For this venture, substantial capital was needed and no one in Teheran was ready to take the risk and put money into such an unknown business. The only one who accepted to buy 10% of the shares was Emile Abboud, one of my partners in Sabet-Pasal company.

I returned to America and asked Pepsi Cola to prepare the drawings for the bottling plant, order the machinery, the conveyors, mixing tanks, lab equipment, trucks, etc., for a production of 2000 cases per day, on our behalf. Then, I went to Germany and found the best bottle maker and ordered 200,000 bottles, with the name Pepsi Cola printed on them, in English and Persian. The concentrate, which is a secret formula, and the crowns were sent from the U.S..

Since my house in Teheran had been rented out, the few months a year that we returned to Iran we would stay at the Darband Hotel in Shemiran, at the foot of the Alburz mountains. One early morning the room telephone rang. It was Emile saying that he was in the lobby and

wanted to see me as soon as possible. I told him I'll be down in 10 minutes. As I came down the stairs, I saw a very disturbed and nervous Mr. Abboud. I said, "What's wrong?" He replied that he had not slept the night before and was worried as to who might buy Pepsi-Cola in Iran and that he would surely lose his 10% capital. I said, "Is that all? Don't worry. I'll put up all the money myself and at least tonight you'll be able to sleep well."

Of course to make a profit in business is normal, but if I undertook this venture, it was not for money alone but rather to offer something better than "Lamar", i.e. a clean, well produced and easily available soft drink.

One day, while having lunch at the home of Hossein Ala (photo 27) Ambassador to the U.S., Prime Minister and Minister of Court, the question of what should we call the new company that was to be formed shortly came up. Mrs. Nasser ol Molk, the mother-in-law of Mr. Ala and an aristocratic lady, suggested the name "Zam Zam, (The fountain of paradise). Truly an excellent choice for a soft drink company.

Next, we turned our attention to finding a suitable site for the factory. I discussed the matter with Mr. Abdol Missagh Missaghian, a close relative and an expert in Real Estate. He said, "Choose a land near Teheran, on a main boulevard, to get as much attention and visitors as possible, yet not too far so that the delivery trucks don't waste time and fuel to service the customers. Wonderful advice. An 8,000 square meter parcel of land was bought just one mile outside of the city. German and American architects drew plans for a very modern building with a large show window so that the bottling operations could be seen by all. The metal superstructure was assembled by Arj company. The

wooden cases were produced by local carpenters. The 12 trucks were Studebakers and imported by Sabet-Pasal. The truck bodies were made locally by Iron smiths who quickly copied the first models that came from abroad.

A lot of water is needed for a bottling plant. So an 80 meter deep well was dug and a 25 centimeter pipe brought a clear, pure water to the surface. But before it could be used, it had to go through a filtration process so a small sand and chemical purification plant was installed.

It was in August 1955 that the first cases of Pepsi Cola were palletized, ready to be marketed. (Photo 28)

The parent company had sent thousands of cardboard and metal posters with the words "Pepsi" in Farsi and English printed over a blue and red crown. Locally, we had prepared advertising material. Dozens of workers placed signs on hundreds of walls and cafe and kiosk fronts overnight. The next morning the inhabitants of Teheran awoke to see the city covered with Pepsi advertising.

The next day, the twelve trucks filled with the product paraded the main streets and then started to sell to predetermined outlets. We sold each bottle for 3.5 Rials and the dealer sold it for 5 Rials, giving him a large profit margin.

With so much advertising, vast distribution and a low price, success was immediate. There was such a big demand that stores ran out of product and had to drive or take a taxi to the plant to replenish their stock.

In 1956, my eldest son Iraj who had just finished his Master of Business Administration at Harvard, returned to Iran and took charge of Zam Zam.

The Pepsi operation became so well known that everyday hundreds of people would come to visit the plant. Among them was Princess Shams and her husband Mr. Pahlbod, accompanied by General Yazdan-Panah. (Photo 29) Their visit was a great encouragement to the employees, workers and management of Zam Zam.

In a short time the name Pepsi became well known throughout the country and a second plant was put up in the Port City of Khorramshahr to serve the oil district of Abadan. But, as this factory did not have enough capacity to serve Southern Iran and the Gulf States, Iraj decided to build a super plant in Ahwaz, the Capitol of Khusiztan. This very modern operation started producing Pepsi Cola in 1957.

My greatest recompense came the day that Dr. Jahanshah Saleh, the Minister of Health, stated the following in one of the sessions of the Iranian Parliament, "Since the availability of Pepsi Cola, there has been a 60% decrease in communal diseases, especially diarrhea."

All of this encouragement and the high sales figures convinced Iraj to continue the expansion both vertically and horizontally. Three more plants were established in the year 1959 in the cities of Resht, Meshed and Isfahan.

Hundreds of trucks were added to the fleet and several dozen warehouses were put up in the provinces. Crown cork, plastic case

making and CO2 plants were installed in Teheran and the South to assure all the material supplies needed.

To bring bottles from abroad was costly and time consuming so we decided to establish a glass bottle factory. This new company's name was "Mina" and, in addition to producing bottles for Zam Zam, it also manufactured jars, medicine bottles and even drinking glasses.

With all of these support companies and a growing market, more plants were created in the cities of Shiraz, Kerman, Iranshahr, Kermanshah, Bandar Abbas and Tabriz.

Twelve plants, with 3500 employees, 450 trucks and 55 distribution centers were producing and selling more than 40 million cases of 24 bottles. In 1978, just a few months before the Islamic Revolution, mobs attacked and partially burnt the beautiful Shiraz plant and then the one in Tabriz. In the first year of the upheaval, 1979, all the Zam Zam organizations were taken over by the revolutionary council. The lack of spare parts, competent technicians, and the jailing or execution of some of the Baha'i managers and employees practically brought the operations to a halt. Finally, because of the U.S. hostage situation, American companies could no longer export their products to Iran. Shipment of Pepsi Cola concentrate to Zam Zam was stopped. 150 million dollars of capital was wasting away and millions of people were deprived of a healthy, clean drink.

THE TEMPORARY EXILE OF THE QUEEN MOTHER

In 1953, Dr. Mohammed Mossadegh was Prime Minister. He had many differences with the Royal family and the Shah had left the country.

In that year, my family and I were in New York. One day the telephone rang and the manager of the Constellation shipping company informed me that one of their ships would dock in Manhattan the next day and that the Queen Mother, the wife of Reza Shah the Great, and her entourage were aboard.

During that Summer, Mr. Nassrollah Entezam, General Morteza Yazdan-Panah, Mr. Mahmoud Foroughi and some other Government Dignitaries were in New York. I brought this news to their attention, but none could believe it. Furthermore, because of the very delicate political situation, no one volunteered to accompany my wife and myself to welcome The Queen Mother. However, early the next morning, General Yazdan-Panah who was adjutant to the Shah, called and said that he and his wife would come with us.

When we arrived at the pier it became clear that the ship had docked early. There was no sign of any passengers. Upon asking, I was informed that there are still a few on board. After obtaining permission, I went inside and the first person I saw was Ali Izadi, Major Domo to her Majesty. I said, "Why aren't you getting off?" He replied that they were waiting to be met by the Iranian Ambassador or the General Consul, and while saying that, he took us to the Queen Mother.

She was wearing a gray dress and a matching hat, and appeared to be rather disturbed. She said, "Everyone left the boat early this morning, but it is hours that we are awaiting the Ambassador or General Consul. Where are they?"

I told her that, "No one was aware of your arrival and that I was informed by the shipping company because we export through them and

they thought that as an Iranian I should know about your trip. If it pleases you, let us all leave the ship."

As I looked around, I saw 8 persons who had accompanied her and about 50 suitcases, cartons, etc. The first thing to do was to call the office to send a truck for the luggage and then call the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel to prepare the necessary rooms.

Then, we started down the gangplank on which a long red carpet had been placed to cover the wooden planks. After the second step, the Queen Mother slipped and fell down, badly breaking her left leg. The Captain of the ship, very disturbed and panicked, ordered that she be taken to the boat's infirmary.

While her leg was being looked after, an ambulance was called and New York Hospital was notified of the event and asked that a surgeon be ready to operate.

Her calm and patience surprised us all and when the ambulance arrived, she insisted that I should accompany her and sit in the seat reserved for the nurse.

I obeyed. The others and the luggage went to the Hotel and we to the hospital. The amazing thing was that instead of complaining about the accident or her pain, she repeatedly asked about the whereabouts and health of her son, The Shah-in-Shah.

Although, I assured her that he was safe and not in danger, her anxiety and concern did not diminish.

We entered the hospital, and although all was prepared for the operation, she refused to be anesthetized. She kept on saying, "They are going to put me to sleep and kill me!"

I told her, "Here no one is against you. The doctors and nurses have nothing to do with Iranian politics. They are sworn to do their duty. So please let them proceed!" She said, "All right, but only if you swear not to leave me alone, and keep my hand until I become conscious!" The doctors accepted this and wearing a sterilized gown, I too was admitted into the operating room.

The broken bone was operated on and the leg put into a plaster cast. Unfortunately, the x-rays showed that it was not in place. So the first cast had to be sawed off, the bones re-connected and a second cast poured. Further x-rays showed that this time the operation was a success.

The Queen Mother stayed 29 days in the hospital. My wife would prepare Iranian dishes according to The Queen Mother's wishes and my two sons would take the food to her room, and I and a Dr. Moqhbelt would visit her often. (Photo 30). While she was there, I received two telegrams from the Shah, thanking me and my family for looking after his mother.

When she was able to leave the hospital, a trip was arranged for her to visit Princess Shams Pahlavi in Los Angeles.

After her departure, Mr. Izadi came to my New York office, saying that he had a message from the Queen Mother. She wanted to thank Bahereh, Iraj, Hormoz and myself for the love we had shown and the hospitality we extended, and asked what could she do for us? I said,

"Tell her that we all regretted the accident and were sad that she had to suffer so much. Our happiness and joy is that she has recuperated so well and that for us is the greatest recompense."

Some years later, after my return to Teheran, Mr. Moshiri, head of the Queen Mother's private office, came one day to visit me at our house on Villa Street. He told me that her Majesty had found out that we were in town, wanted to invite Bahereh and myself for lunch, and that the next Friday she would be waiting for us at her palace. I accepted with much joy, for this would give us great pleasure to see her again.

It was noon when we arrived at her palace on Sepah Avenue. She greeted us with the utmost kindness and love. We spoke about the past, the hospital days, her visit to California and so on. Then we were led to the dinning room where a long table had been set with all the trimmings. To our surprise and joy we saw all the people who had accompanied her to the United States.

The Queen Mother sat at the head of the table. She placed Bahereh to her left and me to her right. The other eight took their designated places.

There were plates of rice, various sauces, sweets, salad, etc. In the center of the table was a big soup dish with "Koofteh Tabrizi", a special dish from the North West Province of Azarbaijan. She said, "I will never forget your hospitality, love and patience while I was in America. I swear that after the passing of Reza Shah the Great, I never went into the kitchen again. During our lifetime, at first I cooked for him, then I supervised the cooking, and finally just sat back and let others do it. But, today I prepared this Koofteh Tabrzi, which Reza Shah liked

very much, in your honor”, and with that she took our plates and served us herself!

Those words, that generosity, and her sense of appreciation caused tears to run down my cheeks. Imagine, a Queen so humble and thoughtful.

But it did not end there. For every time we were in Teheran, she would invite us, often to special ceremonies.

It was in the Summer of 1955 that Mr. Moshiri, her Chief of Protocol, called me saying, "Come to the palace as soon as possible!" I wondered, what had happened? Why the sense of urgency?

Once there, they told me that in order to avoid an accident, her driver braked the car suddenly, that her Majesty was thrown forward and as a result her right foot fractured. She was driven to her residence and the doctors were called.

Her first wish was to have me come and consult with them. I suggested that maybe she would like to be flown to New York - to the same doctor and the same hospital as before. But his Majesty the Shah decided that a professor be brought from Austria to operate in Teheran.

TELEVISION OF IRAN

Iraj, who had studied Business in the U.S., was fascinated by television and often spoke of introducing it into Iran. This idea caused

him to import a closed circuit TV consisting of a small camera, some cables and a receiver.

Naturally he wanted to put it into use. Having learned that the Queen Mother had left the hospital and was resting at home, he suggested that a "Telecast" be organized to entertain her. She accepted but asked, "What are you going to show?" The reply, "There are some musicians who accompany a famous young singer named Gougoush. We'll have them perform in the garden and put the receiver in your bedroom".

My son put the thought into practice and soon the first Iranian TV program became a reality. By coincidence and without announcing it, the Shah came to visit his mother just when the song and dance was being televised in the marble palace.

After asking about her health, his Majesty inquired as to what was happening, from where did the receiver come, who had brought it here, etc. It became very apparent that the Shah-in-Shah liked the idea of having T.V. in Iran.

But he said, "Mr. Eshragi, the Minister of PTT, says it's impossible. He believes we don't have the technicians, the performers, operators, programmers, etc. Worse, there is the problem of importing and servicing thousands of TV sets and who can afford them?" Then, he turned to me and asked, "What do you think?" My answer was that it's a difficult job but not impossible. "So", he said, "if it's not too difficult, I'll ask you to do it and give instructions to the Government to help in every way possible".

A few minutes later, Dr. Manoucher Eghbal, the Chairman of The National Oil Company, entered. (Photo 31). The Shah discussed the matter with him, knowing that his thinking was very positive, and told him, "Give Sabet all the assistance needed so that a TV station can be established as soon as possible and the people of Iran benefit from its programs".

I had always wanted to build a hospital or create a university. Here was my chance to progress the development of our country, for television can contribute so much to education, culture and the advancement of humanity, if done right. So, with the desire of the Shah and the encouragement of my sons and friends, I decided to establish the first TV station in Teheran, well knowing that it will be a non-profit enterprise.

Advertising is the financial backbone of all private TV stations. But in Iran, it would take some time before businessmen would be willing to spend their money for that. Therefore, to get it started and going, my other companies had to support it financially.

Looking backwards, I must admit that creating the television industry in Iran, despite its losses, gave me much more pleasure and joy than all the other businesses which were profitable, because this was a real service to my country and especially to future generations.

In 1957, when the Teheran station went on the air (photo 32), there were only a few countries outside of the U.S., Canada, Japan, and some European nations that had this miracle of communications. Before 1960, no one could imagine the sociological, educative, commercial, and entertainment effects, good and bad, that this invention would have on the world.

In Iran, like many other countries, television touched on all aspects of life and society. It brought into the homes not only something to watch and hear, but more important, to learn. News, children's and women's hour, popular and classic music, plays, games, debates, interviews, movies, etc. were only some of the programs that appeared daily and weekly. The viewers were people from all walks of life, some rich, some less rich. They included old women and men who could not go out at night, workers who needed something to relax after a days hard work, children whose education was limited to what they were taught in school, and so on.

The management of TV of Iran had a lot of work to do. For example, operators, both audio and visual, had to be trained. Lighting specialists, set makers, speakers, announcers, etc., all had to be found and hired for a new profession called television. Writers who had prepared stories and documents for print, now had to widen their vision and capabilities to produce for sight and sound. Films would have to be imported and dubbed or have sub-titles. News had been printed in newspapers or heard on the radio. Now, it would have to be prepared to be seen and heard.

In the past, the masses were exposed to passion plays, fly-by-night theater groups, puppet shows, 3-4 musicians playing together on traditional instruments, etc. Various actors and even women singers made a name for themselves, but only a few were privileged to see and hear them. Comedians sometimes blackened their faces with burnt cork and sang and danced as minstrels. Much like the famous "Al Jolsen."

With the advent of TV in Iran, people came to know symphony orchestras, as well as first class theater with professional actors and actresses. Storytellers, with the help of cartoons and films, now narrated the history of Ancient Persia for adults as well as "Little Red Riding Hood", "La Fontaine" and "Hans Christian Anderson" for the children.

In other countries, the private or government stations could draw on experienced and well trained technicians, producers, writers, actors, actresses, singers and musicians who had performed in concerts, operas, films, radio and the stage. In Iran, there was little such manpower available. If television was to become a success, it had to be created, expanded, encouraged and well remunerated.

There were no schools or colleges where music, dramatic arts, news casting, or advertising were being taught. Technical schools were offering automotive, electrical, metal and woodworking courses, not radio, or movie or television classes. Moreover, the radio and PTT, which are government organizations in Iran, would not permit their engineers or performers to work elsewhere. So, TV Iran had to hire foreign technicians to get the station going, while training its personnel locally or sending young men and women to countries having TV, to be trained.

Announcers, newscasters, storytellers, etc, in other words, all that concerned the Iranian culture, needed people who knew the history, traditions and the psychology and sociology of the country. Talented and well educated men and women were selected and trained for TV.

Little did the viewers know or realize about the problems, anxieties and time used in preparing a half hour program.

Ten years later, with the help of the French Government, a public service station, run and operated by the Iranian Ministry of Education and PTT, became operational. They too, despite a substantial budget and government backing, had to go through the same experiences and headaches as Television of Iran, channel 3.

Anyway, it was rewarding to hear that thousands of people in Teheran and later in Abadan and Ahwaz (the second and third stations), were buying sets to view the programs. This fascinating box was slowly but surely creating an evolution in peoples' thinking, and outlook on life. A new industry was developing that would profoundly change the education, music, economy, literature and even politics of the nation.

To add to the flexibility of the programs and cover events outside of the studios, mobile units and tape recorders were bought. This permitted telecasts from sports stadiums, of parades and even happenings in the parliament. The tapes were used to record shows or events during the day and put them on the air in the evening or night. This technique was especially used for debates, interviews with foreign dignitaries who visited Teheran, and special anniversary dates such as the Shah's Birthday and Independence Day.

Needless to say, Television of Iran sometimes aroused criticism and negative feelings especially when it was competing with newspapers, magazines and the government radio and TV. Jealousy and fanaticism are destructive forces, but patience and understanding can overcome them.

In Iran, as elsewhere, television became a source of solidarity, unification, and democracy. For now hundreds of thousands and even

millions could see what was happening all over the world. Ceremonies, disasters, violence, wars, etc., were shown minutes after they happened. Suffering and joy became a universal sharing, thus bringing people ever closer. Through this media the people of Teheran and wherever TV existed, felt themselves a part of a new World Order, that was establishing peace and a unification of mankind.

When the government station went on the air (ten years after "Television of Iran" - the private channel), we welcomed it very warmly and extended our full cooperation. The biggest contribution by this new station was in the field of education. For every afternoon, the best teachers in math, sciences, history, etc. would use the latest audio-visual technology to provide superior teaching programs, not only into classrooms but also into thousands of homes. Now parents could see what was being taught to their children.

Another important contribution of TV Iran was the interviews that often took place with different guests visiting our country. By this means, the viewers could see and hear world personalities such as Nehru, Johnson, Lola Brigita, the Prince of Japan, The Pope, etc., telling about their countries or professions and wishing the people of Iran prosperity and continued success. (Photo 33-1; 33-2; 33-3)

As a commercial chain, TV of Iran encouraged and helped advertising firms to use this new mass media to show and talk about their clients' products and services. With the rapid industrialization of Iran, it was absolutely necessary to find a method to introduce the myriad of products, from detergents to automobiles, to the buying public. TV was the ideal way. At first, live commercials were telecast and then dozens of studios started to produce taped commercials.

The decor and settings of various shows and programs started to have an influence on people's tastes and choice of furnishings at home and at work. Slowly but surely, its effects on human relations, manners, politics, family affairs, etc., could be observed, especially by educators and sociologists. It helped a developing country such as Iran with its customs, peculiarities, and even one might say backwardness, to catch up, at least partially, with the outside world.

MANUFACTURING OF TELEVISIONS

At first, TV receivers such as RCA, Phillips, Grundig, etc. were imported. Then in 1961, Firooz company, the agent of RCA products in Iran, came to an arrangement whereby TV kits would be imported and assembled in Teheran.

A new company was formed by the name of "Radio Television of Iran" (RTI). Thousands of components arrived each month and finally, the local workshops and carpenters started to copy stampings, or forming the metal parts and producing the wooden cabinets. Persian ingenuity and centuries of craftsmanship quickly took up the job of supplying the needed parts. Unfortunately, the Islamic Revolution of 1978-79 was a destructive force and one of its examples was the burning of the TV assembly plant.

AN AMERICAN-MADE PERSIAN TYPEWRITER

Besides Mr. Moosa Haghani and Mr. Goetter who worked at the New York office at 30 Rockefeller Plaza, I hired a secretary to type the English letters. The Persian or Farsi correspondence was done by hand, taking much time and not being very neat.

So, I wondered - how about a Farsi typewriter? I knew that Arabic and Farsi machines were produced in Europe, but not in the U.S.

We approached a famous American company by the name of Royal Typewriters to produce such a machine. At first, they were reluctant, but later accepted, but on condition that I would help them.

For almost a year I would go to their factories in Stamford, Connecticut, about 1 1/2 hours by train from New York City, once or twice a week to work with their technicians. Latin or English letters are set apart, one from the other. But Farsi letters have to connect. So the job took much time and precision, but finally a typewriter emerged that found its way into offices, homes, industry and schools.

WIRE & CABLE MANUFACTURING

One evening, Bahereh and I were invited for dinner at the newly inaugurated "Teheran Hilton". It was a business reception organized by the Plan Organization. At our table, we met Mr. and Mrs. Castillio who were originally from Cuba but had to flee from the Castro Regime. They told us how their belongings and affairs had been confiscated and they had to find their way to Miami. Later, he was hired by an American company called Phelps-Dodge, which is one of the world's largest excavators of copper and producer of wires and cables.

Mr. Castillio had come to Iran to propose a joint venture, but alas no one seemed interested. Disappointed, they were leaving Teheran in two days.

I became so interested in the possibilities of such an important industry that I told him he should show a little patience and maybe I could help him.

Mr. Castillio delayed his trip by one week, came to the office at Sabet-Pasal building below the Pepsi Cola plant, and gave me all the details to convince me to not only pursue this matter but maybe invest in such a project.

Through Mr. Ala, we met with the Shah, who showed a very positive attitude, especially since Iran has cooper mines in "Sar Cheshme" in the province of Kerman. His Majesty instructed Mr. Najm Abadi, Minister of Mines and Industries to follow up the matter. He, in turn, agreed that a cable and wire factory was needed for the electrification and communication industries of our country. Mr. Castillio was overjoyed and kissed me.

I believe that a company's name should reflect its activity or product. By merging the words "Sim" (wire) and Cable, the name: "SICAB" was created. I consulted this with my son Iraj and engineer Panahi who both approved.

The capitalization and registration of the company was completed in a short time. A large plot of land was bought in the industrial zone of Ghazvin, near Teheran, and the building built with the help of a Swiss company, Suter & Suter, and the machines ordered through Phelps-Dodge. The operation was about to start when the revolution put a stop to all activities.

However, I learned that some time later, a part of the factory became operational.

A VISIT TO THE ISLAND OF MAURITIUS WHERE REZA SHAH THE GREAT WAS EXILED

While attending a Baha'i conference on the Island of Mauritius, I was told that this was where Reza Shah, The Great, founder of modern Iran was exiled for a time.

After flying there from Teheran and driving a long winding road through jungles, we arrived at a small town, which was the capitol, and checked into a modest hotel.

When the conference, which had been organized to promote world unity and to discuss ways to improve the economic and social conditions of the world, ended, a Baha'i friend suggested that we go sight-seeing and visit the place that had been the Pahlavi residence.

Out of curiosity I agreed and soon we found ourselves in a huge property in the middle of which a French styled palace had been built by a wealthy land-owner. After his passing, the building and grounds had been abandoned and had fallen into despair.

My thoughts went to the island of St. Helena, where Napoleon was exiled. At that very moment I decided to buy the whole property. When asked about the details of those past years, the caretaker said, "I don't know much, but there is a British Colonel that was appointed as host of his Majesty. I'll take you to meet him." But when we arrived at the small house, the colonel's wife told us that about two weeks ago he had passed away, and she had little knowledge of what went on in those days. However, she knew that Reza Shah and her husband went walking every morning, but the rest of the time, his Majesty would stay

indoors. The children of the Royal family would come from time to time to visit their parents. She brought several albums in which pictures taken by her late husband were neatly arranged. One photo showed Mohammad Reza Shah and his first bride, Fowzieh, the sister of the King of Egypt, Faroukh. On the back of this photo the son had written that he missed his father and asked about his health. Other pictures showed the Prince and Princess while at play or sitting at the dinning table.

But what attracted me the most was a large blue sheet of paper which was signed by the British Consul in Bombay authorizing Reza Shah and eight of his family or companions to enter the Island of Mauritius, which at that time in 1941-42 was part of the British Empire. There were eight photos glued to the "Mass Visa" with the names printed underneath each one.

Seeing this document brought tears to my eyes and choked with emotion I said to her, "Can I have these albums and this sheet?" Not hearing a favorable reply, I offered to buy them and explained that these were of no value to her but for me as an Iranian, they were important. She accepted. I bought them and on the way back to the hotel, decided that this property, which has such a historical significance in the history of Iran, should be bought.

A good friend of our family, Aziz Navidi, was a Baha'i pioneer in this island and had lived in Mauritius a long time. Being a lawyer, Aziz helped me to find a notary public who represented the owner's son. The price was paid, the transfer document signed, and I had a photographer take color pictures of the whole property.

Upon my return to Teheran, I went to see Mr. Ala, Minister of Court. After telling him about my trip, visit and purchase of this historic site, I showed him the pictures and said, "I would like to offer this to my nation and the Shah, so it can become a museum and never be demolished". Mr. Pahlbod, the Minister of Arts and Culture and the brother-in-law of the Shah brought the matter to His Majesty's attention.

The next day an audience was held at which I narrated the whole story, showed the pictures, and reiterated my wish. His Majesty, very moved and while appreciating my offer said this property should be transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Later, the National Oil Company started to repair the property and turned it into a museum. The revolution of 1979 probably changed the situation, but the albums and the visa were left in Teheran.

THE ABADAN TV STATION

As stated before, the first private commercial TV station started in 1957 in Teheran. Because of its tremendous success and the government's desire to provide TV for the industrial and oil regions of the South, a second station started its telecasts in the fall of 1959 in Abadan. His Majesty, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, and Queen Farah were at the inauguration. (Photo 34)

Mr. Ebrahim Mansouri was the first manager of this important station, which not only covered the Province of Khusistan, but also transmitted to the Persian Gulf states and emirates. Many of the programs were thus in Arabic as well as in Persian.

As there was no video-tape at that time, all the programs were live. One can imagine what time and sacrifice was needed to prepare so many shows seven days a week. Here, I have to thank Mr. Mansouri and all the staff, especially the youth who did such a wonderful job.

Some of the programs were as follows:

- Children's
- News in Persian, English and Arabic
- Health and Sanitation
- Local and National Music
- Quiz and Theater
- Women's

The telecasts in Arabic and English were much appreciated by our Gulf neighbors who did not have their own TV stations. This built such good relations between Iran and those countries that our managers were often invited by the emirates to discuss special programs and later, to guide them in establishing their own TV chains.

THE MARRIAGE OF HABIB AND BAHEREH

In 1927 I thought of marrying. To select an unknown person and to see her was impossible. In those days someone would introduce the girl and the parents did the choosing. In my case, after searching and getting the family's opinion, it was decided that I should marry Uncle Rahim Arjomand's daughter, Maghbooleh. It was a good choice, for we knew one another from our family gatherings.

She was attractive, was getting a fine education at Tarbiat School, and had been taught housekeeping by her very capable mother. We became

engaged and the marriage date set. But her grandmother died and we had to postpone the wedding.

In the meantime, another suitor came along. He was the son of a Shirazi family called Dehghan and was wealthier than I.

One day, my uncle called me into his office at the Ministry of Post and Telegraph and told me, "Don't count on getting married to my daughter." This decision made me sad, but I reasoned that if a marriage is not based on love and harmony, it is better that it not be.

Then I asked my uncle, "What should I say to our family and friends? If I say that Maghbooleh has a problem, then I am hurting my own cousin. If I say that there is something wrong with me and that she has refused?..." These two questions bothered my uncle for I could see that he had gone into some deep thoughts. Finding it difficult to give me an answer, he simply said, "Tell them the marriage has been called off!" I did just that and kept the family relationship in peace and harmony.

Upon my return to the office I contacted my good friend engineer Fath-O-Llah Moshir-O-Behi and asked him what to do? After some thought, he said, "Before the news gets out and the matter becomes embarrassing, find some other girl and get married." His suggestion was excellent! But which girl? And where to find her?

I had another friend by the name of Mohammed Partovi who had much experience, was learned, and had a good sense of humor. He told me, "My wife, the daughter of Said Ahmed Bagheroff (Khamsi) of Rasht, has a sister who is beautiful and charming and you would make a lovely couple."

I thought to myself, "If you could marry Bagheroff's daughter, nothing would be better". So I said to Partovi, "Get going and arrange it!"

Mr. Bagheroff and his entire family were coming from Rasht to Tehran to visit his cousin, Said Nassrollah, stay at his hotel, and spend a week in the capitol. Mr. Partovi took me to the Grand Hotel to meet them. In turn, I invited them to my house for lunch and had a good look at Bahereh and fell in love, not one time, but a hundred times.

Meetings and discussions followed and some weeks later, we obtained our parents permission to marry.

Accompanied by Fat-O-Llah, we drove to Rasht in my Dodge automobile and in the summer of 1929, Bahereh and I were married. (Photos 35.1, 35.2, 35.3, 35.4, 35.5)

I have had sixty years of a wonderful marriage to a women who has been understanding, caring, a superb housekeeper, extremely spiritual, good looking and very faithful. We have two children, Iraj, born February 22, 1931 and Hormoz, born August 10, 1936.

Iraj married Faegheh Nika Ramzi in 1957 and they have three children: Tina, who married engineer Siavosh Sefidvash in 1987. They live near San Diego, California. The second child is Sina Abdullah, who married Jaquiline, daughter of Massoud Eghrari of Long Island, New York in 1988. They now live in Washington, D.C. The second son is Taj. He was born in Geneva, Switzerland and lives in Arizona. Iraj's daughter and sons studied in Teheran, Switzerland, England and the U.S. They are spiritual, fine looking and successful.

Hormoz married Iran Khosrowshahi in Geneva in 1963 and they have a son, Reja who was born in 1964. He studied in Teheran and the U.S. From 1985 to 1989 Reja worked as an assistant in a bank in Los Angeles, and in 1990 went to New York to join his father at Gulf Associates.

Hormoz remarried in 1964 to Valerie Springer and they have two sons, Aram and Karim. (Photo 36)

HABIB SABET'S LAST YEARS

(Written by Iraj and Hormoz Sabet)

Dear Readers:

All that you have read so far was written by our father, Habib Sabet, and has been printed exactly as he wrote it.

But, because of his sudden passing, the book was left incomplete. We, his children thought that the story of his life should be finished up to the last days of his earthly existence.

During the last years of the reign of Mohammed Reza Shah, for different reasons, many disappointed businessmen left the country with the idea of continuing their activities elsewhere.

On the contrary, our father not only tried to convince the others to stay, but also to set an example, continued his activities with all the energy and love that he had for his country.

Although he had reached an age of retirement, he wanted to pursue his efforts and guide his sons and the managers of the companies that he had established personally or was on the Board of Directors. These Companies were:

Firooz Co.

Iran Volkswagen Co.

Television of Iran

Radio and TV of Iran

Sicab Co.

Iran Gas Co.

Iran Cylinder Co.
Transpic Co.
Johnson and Johnson of Iran
Zam Zam Bottling
Mina Glass Co.
Crown Cork Factory
Auto-Nour Co.
General Tire Co.
Bank of Iran and the Middle East
Industrial and Mining Bank of Iran
Iranians Bank
Irano-British Bank
Esso Refinery and Blending Co.
Schering Pharmaceutical of Iran
Squibb of Iran
Iramoz Properties Co.

Two years before the Iranian Islamic Revolution, our father and mother went to Paris to follow up on some business matters and see some of their grandchildren who were studying in Europe.

Their intention was to return to Teheran in the fall of 1978. When the followers of Khomeini set fire to the Pepsi Cola plant of Shiraz, they postponed their trip and spent most of their time helping social and educational organizations, as well as their family.

The two of us, Iraj and Hormoz, having spent our summer vacations in Europe, were anxious to return to our homes and business activities. Unfortunately, the situation in Iran became worse, and we too had to abandon the idea of returning to Teheran.

Our father had an office in New York, which was still functioning. After leaving Paris for the U.S., he would spend much of his time there writing his memoirs, (photo 37 and 38) or helping his friends and especially, Iranian students.

In 1979 the Islamic Revolutionary Council decreed that because the Sabets were Baha'is, all their assets and even private belongings were to be confiscated. Thus, three generations' efforts, ingenuity, entrepreneurship, sacrifice and contribution to their country was swept aside, and the return of Bahereh and Habib Sabet, their two sons and six grandchildren became impossible.

Our father went to Los Angeles and continued to see his old friends and the hundreds of ex-managers and employees who like himself were now in exile.

To us he would say, "Don't be too sad, for whatever we created in Iran was for Iran and our countrymen and women - no matter which government is in power, the people will benefit from what we did." For example, when the U.S. forbade the export of Pepsi concentrate, he became disturbed saying that this action deprives the Iranians from having their soft drink - it has nothing to do with the presence or absence of Sabet or this or that government! In the case of spare parts, too, he told the manufacturers to send them to Iran, for it would be unjust to bring those machinery to a halt.

It was at the insistence of Iraj that our father started to write his memoirs in 1984. At first he was reluctant, but his friends and the two of us convinced him that this would be good not only for his descendants, but for the youth who would learn much from his experiences.

He devoted nearly six years to this task, bringing together his own recollections, pictures and stories and anecdotes from his family and friends. He would get up at about 5 AM nearly everyday to work on this project which gave him so much pleasure. (Photo 37).

We are sure that his life would have continued for many more years, but a heart attack took him to the next world on February 20, 1990.

His passing saddened the hearts of his family, relatives and many, many friends. Memorial services were held in Los Angeles, New York and Geneva. Telegrams and letters of condolences were sent by hundreds of Iranians and non-Iranians from around the world to us, but mostly to his widow, Bahereh, who was shattered by his death.

Although acknowledgments have been sent out, if anyone was forgotten, we take this opportunity to thank them also.

Dear Reader, even though all our assets were taken over by the Revolutionary Council, and each of us and our children are in different parts of the world, still the biggest and most valuable inheritance that our father left us is the following:

An unshakable faith in God and in his messenger for this day, Baha'ullah, whose teachings are to be a spiritual person and to serve humanity. He educated and brought us up to follow in his foot-steps. If only we could.

Our father was a self-made man. He believed in truth, honesty and spiritual qualities. He never had a grudge against anyone and showed understanding and love towards even those who tried to hurt him. He

loved his native land of Iran. He valued wealth but never became a slave to it. If he lost money, he would not let it affect him and would compare it to spilt milk. He respected the dignity of his co-workers.

He would tell us, "My success is due to honesty and truthfulness and a desire for the betterment of mankind, which is a fundamental Baha'i principle."

The passing of his friends made him extremely sad, as was the case when Youseff Sobhani, the Pepsi plant manager, was executed. It shook him and made him cry.

To his wife, our mother, he was very devoted and loving. He was humble and appreciative of God's blessings.

His heart was like the ocean and he wouldn't let problems discourage him.

He believed in a bright future for Iran and would say that for one who has faith, the recent upheavals and losses are of little importance.

At a meeting of Iranians, just a few months before his passing away, he was very happy and proud to see so many of his old friends and relatives in good health and fairly prosperous, despite what they had gone through after the revolution. Asked to say a few words, he said, "Dear compatriots, don't be sad and forlorn because you are away from your beloved country. It was surely the will of the Almighty that you are in Western, industrialized nations. Open your eyes and ears and learn their technologies and secrets of success. Then you can return one day and serve your country, which needs the experiences and knowledge that you have acquired. This is your God given duty!"

The heritage that he left us is his good name, the unforgettable service that he rendered his country and the progressive ideas that are based on a spiritual foundation.

His strong will and the desire to serve humanity can be considered exemplary.

Today, he is not in this world, but his image is visible to his children and friends and his spirit is with us.

California

June 1993

Iraj and Hormoz Sabet